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THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS AND PLATO:  
A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF PLATONISM ON THE “FIFTH GOSPEL”

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Cover illustration: Plato and other Greek sages from the depiction of the Tree of Jesse (c. 1600) at Sucevița Monastery, Romania. Photo courtesy of Ekaterina Levicheva.

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## A NOTE TO THE READER

Throughout this dissertation, the Coptic text of the Gospel of Thomas (hereafter *Thomas*) is reproduced from the critical edition prepared by Bentley Layton.<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the English translation of the Coptic *Thomas* I cite is the one prepared by the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften and revised by Stephen J. Patterson and James M. Robinson.<sup>2</sup> The Greek fragments of *Thomas* are cited as they were edited and translated by Harold W. Attridge, with occasional modifications.<sup>3</sup> I refer to the subunits within the individual sayings of the Coptic version of *Thomas* according to the versification used by the Berliner Arbeitskreis.<sup>4</sup> As for the Oxyrhynchus fragments, I follow the numeration of verses introduced in *Q-Thomas Reader*,<sup>5</sup> with one exception: P.Oxy. 1.27–30 is numbered *Thomas* 30:3–4, not *Thomas* 77:2–3.

My references to the Sahidic New Testament manuscripts follow the SMR (Schmitz-Mink-Richter) citation method. The other Coptic literary manuscripts are cited according to the sigla of the CMCL (Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari). With the exception of *Thomas*, all texts from the Nag Hammadi codices, Berlin codex, and codex Tchacos are quoted according to the page and line numbers. The abbreviations I use for these texts, as well as for the biblical texts, apostolic fathers, and the so-called Old Testament pseudepigrapha and New Testament apocrypha are the ones prescribed in the second edition (2014) of the *SBL Handbook of Style*.

All other works in Latin and Greek are cited according to their Latin titles. The titles for the Greek texts are from the online version of the *TLG Canon*, with a few exceptions.<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise stated, quotations from the Greek works reproduce the texts of the editions utilized in the TLG digital library. My references to these texts follow the divisions employed in the TLG.<sup>7</sup>

Unless otherwise stated, all translations of the ancient sources quoted in this dissertation are mine.

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<sup>1</sup> See Layton 1989, 1:52–92.

<sup>2</sup> See Patterson 2011b, 1–25.

<sup>3</sup> See Attridge 1989a.

<sup>4</sup> See Aland 1997, 519–46.

<sup>5</sup> See Kloppenborg et al. 1990, 156–8.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, for the sake of brevity, I cite Alcinous' handbook as *Didascalicus*, not as *Epitome doctrinae Platonicae sive Διδασκαλικός*.

<sup>7</sup> Again, with a few exceptions; e.g., I follow the common practice and cite Holl's edition of Epiphanius' *Panarion* according to the chapter, section, and subsection numbers, not the page and line numbers.

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## Part I. Setting the Scene

This doctoral dissertation presents a contribution to academic research on the interaction between early Christianity and Greco-Roman philosophy. Even today, when scholars of classical philology and Biblical Studies seem to have escaped from their “splendid isolation” and learned to appreciate interdisciplinary research, experts in ancient Christianity and historians of philosophy often remain mutually indifferent. This pattern has long been a blind spot for both fields of study. As David N. Sedley points out, it is impossible to gain insight into early Christianity without considering its interaction with the philosophical traditions of antiquity:

The birth, rise and eventual triumph of Christianity is an integral part of the philosophical history of the empire, and not least of Rome itself. Patristic writers of the calibre of Origen, Eusebius, Augustine and Boethius were immersed in contemporary pagan philosophy, and interacted with it on many levels. To understand the nature of early Christianity, it is imperative to relate it to the philosophical culture of late antiquity, of which it is indeed an inseparable part, just as, conversely, understanding the meaning of ancient philosophy itself requires contextualizing it within the religious culture of the ancient world.<sup>8</sup>

Sedley’s programmatic words hardly benefit from further comment, except for one important detail: while the term “late antiquity” is somewhat vague and the chronology of this period is debatable, no one perhaps would argue that the nascent years of Christianity lie outside its early temporal limits. But does this mean that the first Jesus-believers were, so to speak, philosophically innocent? By no means! As Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg have recently noted in their preface to a collected volume dedicated to the earliest Christian engagement with Stoicism, while classical scholarship was mainly interested in the Christian interactions with philosophy up until Origen, over the last few decades “attempts have been made to take the role of philosophy in early Christianity further back into the first century.”<sup>9</sup>

My study will advance along this path. Its focus will be on an early Christian sayings collection known as *Thomas*. The core hypothesis of my project is that Platonism in its “Middle” form had a significant impact on this text. According to an ancient doxographer, Plato was by no means a thinker of many doctrines (πολύδοξος), but certainly one of many voices (πολύφωνος) (Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.7.4a; cf. 2.7.3f).<sup>10</sup> This eloquent remark also applies to the subject of this study: *Thomas* is most certainly a polyphonic text. As the scholars of *Thomas* have shown, some sayings in *Thomas* resonate with the Jewish Wisdom literature,<sup>11</sup> while others probably draw upon apocalyptic traditions,<sup>12</sup> preserve the voice of the historical Jesus,<sup>13</sup> etc. Due to its “splendid isolation,” however, previous scholarship has largely been unable to hear any of these voices. Not only did *Thomas*, like Plato, have many voices; as I will demonstrate in this dissertation, one of its voices was that of Plato—of course, not that of

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<sup>8</sup> Sedley 2003a, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Rasimus, Engberg-Pedersen, and Dunderberg 2010, vii.

<sup>10</sup> These two passages belong to the segment in Stobaeus that is often designated “Doxography A” (*Anth.* 2.7.1–4b; see Hahn 1990, 2945). Scholars often identify the author of Doxography A with Arius Didymus. I agree with Göransson 1995, 221–6, in finding this identification problematic.

<sup>11</sup> See Davies 1983.

<sup>12</sup> See DeConick 1996.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Patterson 1993, 217–41; Patterson 2006.

the “real” Plato, but that of the Plato as people knew him in contemporary times: the Plato of Middle Platonism. The results of my investigation will hopefully provide a better understanding of *Thomas* and, in broader terms, of the relationship between early Christianity and Platonism.

In the following four chapters of this section, I set the scene before proceeding to the heart of the matter. In the first chapter (“Preliminary Notes on *Thomas*”), I briefly discuss the date and compositional history of *Thomas*. In the second (“*Thomas* and Philosophy: A History of Research”), I outline the history of research on *Thomas* and philosophy. In the third (“Middle Platonism: A Debated Concept”), I touch upon the relevant issues pertaining to the phenomenon of Middle Platonism. Finally, in the fourth chapter (“Recent Research on Early Christian Appropriation of Platonism”), I offer a survey of the studies that constitute the academic context of my dissertation.

## 1. Preliminary Notes on *Thomas*

Some preparatory work needs to be done before approaching the Platonizing tendencies in *Thomas*. The historical circumstances in which the text was produced is of particular interest and a necessary preliminary to the explication of the text itself. More than half a century has passed since the *editio princeps*<sup>14</sup> was published and though numerous, important studies on *Thomas* have been published, few facts have been established within scholarly consensus.

At least the following facts are generally undisputed:

- 1) *Thomas* is not a narrative and, therefore, in terms of its genre, is not a gospel, but a sayings collection. It is thus structurally similar to such texts as the Sentences of Sextus and *Ratae sententiae* by Epicurus.
- 2) Successive Thomasine sayings are often connected by catchwords, e.g. sayings 27 and 28 are linked by “the world” (ὁ κόσμος in the Greek text; πκοσμος in the Coptic).
- 3) Sometimes a group of sayings seems to be united by a common theme.
- 4) Some of the Thomasine material is similar or even almost identical with that of the Synoptic tradition. Yet in the Thomasine context these sayings often seem to convey a message that is rather different from that of their Synoptic counterparts.

All modern scholars of *Thomas* would most certainly agree with the facts summarized in the preceding list. But there is an ongoing debate about every single fact that is not on this list. For instance, whereas there is no doubt that *Thomas* is organized by catchwords, it is unclear whether there are any other organizing principles in this text. Similarly, there are different opinions about what should be considered to be a catchword and what should not be. There is no consensus on the question of the text’s dependence on the Synoptic tradition. Different parties have opposing views on the relevance of this text for the study of historical Jesus. The list goes on and on.

Clearly, it is unfair to expect from one dissertation to unearth all the mysteries that have remained unsolved by the academic community over the last half century. There are, nevertheless, at least two major topics that have to be demystified in this introductory chapter: the date and the original language of *Thomas*. The latter question seems to be less challenging than the former, and, in light of recent research, does not seem to require a long and detailed discussion.

Apart from a few quotations, of which only one seems to be undisputed (Pseudo-Origen,<sup>15</sup> *Ref.* 5.7.20; cf. *Thomas* 4),<sup>16</sup> there are four witnesses to the text of *Thomas*. The Greek *Thomas* survives in three fragmentary manuscripts from the site of the ancient Egyptian city of Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy.

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<sup>14</sup> See Guillaumont et al. 1959.

<sup>15</sup> According to the conventional view, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* was authored by Hippolytus. However, in recent years, a number of scholars have argued that the biblical exegete Hippolytus, whose works are listed in Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.22) and Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 61), could not have written *Refutatio* and that the authorship of this text thus remains unknown (see Brent 1995; Cerrato 2002, 1–123; Litwa 2016, xxxii–xl). It is worth noting that the manuscript tradition unanimously ascribes *Refutatio* to Origen (see Litwa 2016, xxvii and xxxii). It seems that Theodoret held the same view, since, in many passages of his *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, he draws upon *Refutatio* (see Volkmar 1855, 22–55) and refers to Origen as his source (see, for instance, the chapter on the Elkesaites, PG 83.393.5–30). Moreover, Photius reports that some people attribute the work entitled “The Labyrinth (ὁ λαβύρινθος),” which should probably be identified with *Refutatio* (see Brent 1995, 132), to Origen (Photius, *Bibl.* 48.12a.5–6 Bekker). Given that Origen certainly was not the author of *Refutatio* (see Brent 1995, 128–31), it seems reasonable to call the author of this text “Pseudo-Origen” (I am grateful to István Bugár for this suggestion, as well as the references to Theodoret and Photius).

<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that this quotation must not be seen in isolation from its immediate context. As Johnson 2010, 305–21, has recently argued, it is likely that both the quotation and the preceding remarks in this passage (*Ref.* 5.7.20) come from a Naassene source and that together they “manifest knowledge of, and reflection on,” *Thomas* 2–5.

1, P.Oxy. 654, and P.Oxy. 655). The Coptic *Thomas* survives as the second writing of NHC II. Since the text of *Thomas* comes down to us in two languages, Greek and Coptic, one of the first problems that scholars were supposed to solve was the relation between the Greek and the Coptic *Thomas*. In the earliest days of Thomasine scholarship, Gérard Garitte suggested that the Greek text of *Thomas* attested by the Oxyrhynchus fragments was a translation from Coptic.<sup>17</sup> A year later, however, Garitte's arguments were successfully refuted by Ernst Haenchen, who also pointed out that Garitte's hypothesis presupposed the existence of a Coptic *Thomas* already in the second century CE, which appears to be extremely unlikely.<sup>18</sup>

If the Greek text of the Oxyrhynchus fragments was not translated from Coptic, then it follows that the opposite must likely be true: the Coptic *Thomas* attested by NHC II is translated from a Greek *Vorlage*. Some scholars, however, have made attempts to add yet another language to the mix and proposed that the Semiticisms in *Thomas* indicate that the Greek text is, in fact, a translation from either Aramaic or Syriac. But these Semiticism hypotheses do not hold up to much scrutiny. As Simon Gathercole has recently demonstrated, there is no reason to suspect a Semitic *Thomas* behind the Greek one.<sup>19</sup>

The former question that needs demystifying, the date of *Thomas*, is a much more complicated issue and thus merits a much more thorough discussion. To begin with the material evidence, the earliest witness to the text of *Thomas* is P.Oxy. 1.<sup>20</sup> P.Oxy. 1 is a fragment of a leaf from a papyrus codex. Larry Hurtado estimates the original size of the leaf to be 10–13+ × 27+ cm, which means that P.Oxy. 1 belongs to Eric G. Turner's "Group 8" of papyrus codices,<sup>21</sup> i.e. "one of the more common shapes among codices of the second and third centuries CE."<sup>22</sup> Paleographically, however, P.Oxy. 1 is commonly dated to the early third century CE;<sup>23</sup> this latter date was suggested by the first editors of the fragment, Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, who wrote that, based on the scribe's hand, "the papyrus was probably written not much later than the year 200."<sup>24</sup>

The fact that our earliest textual witness was produced in the early third century CE establishes the most reliable *terminus ante quem* for *Thomas*; hence, the text that is attested by the Oxyrhynchus fragments and NHC II must have been composed somewhere between the first generations of the Jesus movement and the early third century CE. Remarkably, the range of dates that are theoretically possible almost coincides with the range of dates that have actually been suggested: from 50–70 CE, as suggested by Stevan Davies,<sup>25</sup> to about 200 CE, as suggested by Han J. W. Drijvers.<sup>26</sup>

This disparity of opinions may to some degree be explained by the fact that *Thomas* itself provides us with what the field of law dubs "conflicting evidence." The most telling data come from the study of Synoptic parallels to *Thomas*. There are Thomasine sayings that are demonstratively dependent on the Synoptics, as Risto Uro, for instance, has noted, in the obvious Matthean editorial

<sup>17</sup> See Garitte 1960; see also Kuhn 1960, 319–20.

<sup>18</sup> See Haenchen 1961, 157–60.

<sup>19</sup> See Gathercole 2012, 19–125. See also my critical notes on the alleged Semitic background of the Thomasine term *μοναχός* in chapter 7.

<sup>20</sup> For the high-quality images of P.Oxy. 1, see Wayment 2013, 391–2.

<sup>21</sup> See Turner 1977, 20–1.

<sup>22</sup> Hurtado 2008, 21.

<sup>23</sup> See Attridge 1989a, 96–7; Hurtado 2008, 22; cf., however, Turner 1977, 91 and 143, where P.Oxy. 1 is dated to the turn of the second century, i.e. ± 200 CE.

<sup>24</sup> Grenfell and Hunt 1897, 6.

<sup>25</sup> See Davies 1983, 146.

<sup>26</sup> See Drijvers 1982, 173.

traits in the wording of *Thomas* 14:5. If we accept the view shared by the vast majority of New Testament scholars, i.e. that Mark was a source of Matthew, then Matt 15:11 appears to be one of those instances where Matthew used Mark as his source, as there are compelling reasons to think that this verse is a redactional reformulation of Mark 7:15. Thus, since Matt 15:11 and *Thomas* 14:5 are “almost identical,” *Thomas* in this particular case appears to depend on Matthew.<sup>27</sup>

While the list of examples of Thomasine borrowings from the Synoptic gospels may be added to, it seems unlikely at any rate that all Synoptic parallels in *Thomas* come *ipso facto* from Synoptic gospels. While some of the Synoptic-resembling sayings in *Thomas* clearly exhibit the traits of Synoptic redaction (as is the case with *Thomas* 14:5), others do not seem to contain such traits.

To be sure, numerous Thomasine sayings may have no parallels in the Synoptic gospels, but do have parallels to other texts, e.g. the lion saying in *Thomas* 7 and Didymus the Blind, *Comm. Ps.* 315.27–316.4 Gronewald.<sup>28</sup> Since in most cases there is no reason to suspect that these latter texts depend on *Thomas*, viz. there is no reason to think that Didymus the Blind depends on *Thomas* 7 or vice versa, we must surmise that at least some non-Synoptic Thomasine sayings that are attested outside *Thomas* did not originate from *Thomas*.

In other words, *Thomas* accumulated various traditions, both Synoptic-resembling and otherwise; these traditions come from various sources, including, but not limited to, the Synoptic gospels. Since the Synoptic tradition is only one of the many Thomasine sources, and since it is likely that other sources also contained Synoptic-resembling sayings, it seems plausible that some of the Synoptic-resembling Thomasine sayings do not come from a Synoptic gospel (or a source dependent on the Synoptic tradition). Thus, I suggest that in the cases when a Synoptic-resembling Thomasine saying does not exhibit any Synoptic editorial traits, *Thomas* deserves to be given the benefit of the doubt and thus to be treated as an independent witness of a given tradition. While the relation of *Thomas* to the Synoptic Gospels is beyond the scope of this dissertation, in the following chapters I will occasionally discuss the Synoptic-resembling Thomasine sayings that seem to be independent from the Synoptic tradition.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps, the most remarkable example of a saying that can claim independence from the Synoptics is *Thomas* 65, the Thomasine version of the Parable of the Tenants. As John S. Kloppenborg has demonstrated, and indeed in remarkable detail,<sup>30</sup> unlike its Synoptic counterparts, *Thomas* 65 lacks any secondary allusions to Isa 5:1–7 LXX. Moreover, while the Synoptic versions of the parable are unrealistic and allegorized, *Thomas* 65 “reflects accurately the patterns of vineyard ownership in the first century CE, the economic and agrarian practices associated with viticulture, and the legal situation of the owner in instances of conflict with tenants.”<sup>31</sup> According to Kloppenborg, since narrative realism does not seem to be one of *Thomas*’ strong suits, it is hard to imagine how the realistic Thomasine version could derive from an unrealistic Synoptic one.

Finally, it is not enough to say that the Synoptic-resembling Thomasine sayings sometimes appear to be independent from their Synoptic counterparts; occasionally, a case can be made for Thomasine priority. As early as 1938, before the Nag Hammadi codices were discovered and the text

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<sup>27</sup> See Uro 1998b, 23.

<sup>28</sup> I discuss this saying in chapter 10. See also the parallels listed in Pesce 2004, 58–73 and 570–82.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Excursus V.

<sup>30</sup> See Kloppenborg 2006.

<sup>31</sup> Kloppenborg 2014, 220.

of P.Oxy. 655 identified as *Thomas*,<sup>32</sup> T. C. Skeat made a compelling argument that the reading attested in what we now know as the Greek version of *Thomas* 36 (P.Oxy. 655 col. i, ll. 9–10) antedates the parallel reading in Q, the hypothetical Synoptic Sayings Source. While, according to the Greek *Thomas*, the lilies “[ο]ὐ ξα[ί]νει οὐδὲ ν[ή]θει,” “neither card nor spin,” Q 12:27 reads, “Consider the lilies, how they grow (αὐξάνει): they neither toil nor spin (οὐ κοπιᾷ οὐδὲ νήθει).” As Skeat demonstrated, the reading of Q 12:27 must be later, since αὐξάνει is most certainly a corruption of οὐ ξαίνει. The most likely explanation for the emergence of this later reading is, first, due to scribal error οὐ ξαίνει οὐδὲ νήθει became \*αὐξάνει οὐδὲ νήθει, which made the Greek text ungrammatical; second, οὐ κοπιᾷ was inserted in order for οὐδέ to be preceded by a negative verb. In the words of Paul Maas, Skeat’s proposal is “as surprising as it is convincing”,<sup>33</sup> recently, Skeat’s argument has been supported and elaborated upon by Christoph Heil and James M. Robinson.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, there are Thomasine sayings that, in all likelihood, depend on the Synoptics; there are Synoptic-resembling sayings that are arguably independent from the Synoptic tradition; and there are sayings that may attest to pre-Synoptic tradition. To explain this hodgepodge of “conflicting evidence,” then, and to offer a plausible date for *Thomas* is a daunting task. To complicate already complicated matters, we must also take into account Thomasine material that is without parallels to other sources. The most striking example comes from *Thomas* 12:

12:1 πεχε ἡμαθῆτης ἡϊϛ χε τῆσοῦν χε κναβωκ ἡτοοτῆ ἡιμ πε ετναρ̄ νοϛ ερραῖ εχων 12:2 πεχε ιϛ ναγ χε πμα ντατετῆι ἡμαγ ετετναβωκ ϧα ἱακωβος παικαιος παει ἡτα τπε ἡν̄ πκαρ ϧωπε ετβητῆ

12:1 The disciples said to Jesus: “We know that you will depart from us. Who (then) will rule over us?” 12:2 Jesus said to them: “Wherever you come from, you should go to James the Just for whose sake heaven and earth came into being.”<sup>35</sup>

The fascinating feature of saying 12 is that it seems to send “mixed signals” to the audience of *Thomas*. Taken out of its Thomasine context, saying 12 would appear to contain a praise of James. Johannes Munck even went as far as to call *Thomas* 12 “the strongest description of the place of James in the Salvation story.”<sup>36</sup> But when we read saying 12 in its proper context, we realize that what Jesus says about James is in fact “both ironic and negative.”<sup>37</sup>

Let us first approach saying 12 as an isolated text. The disciples ask Jesus who is going to be their leader after his departure: ἡιμ πε ετναρ̄ νοϛ ερραῖ εχων, “Who will be great/the greatest over

<sup>32</sup> The suggestion that the three Oxyrhynchus fragments attest the same text as the second writing of NHC II was initially made in Puech 1958. Before the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices, scholars were able to identify P.Oxy. 1 and P.Oxy. 654 as witnesses to the same text, but P.Oxy. 655 was usually considered to be a fragment of a different “apocryphal” gospel; see, e.g., the *editio princeps* of P.Oxy. 655: Grenfell and Hunt 1904, 22–8. The view that P.Oxy. 655 is a witness to the same text as P.Oxy. 1 and P.Oxy. 654 was expressed already in Bartlett 1905, 124, but did not receive any support (see, e.g., Evelyn White 1920, xlix–li).

<sup>33</sup> Maas 1958, 40.

<sup>34</sup> See Skeat 2004; Robinson and Heil 1998; Robinson and Heil 2001; Robinson 2007.

<sup>35</sup> I have modified the translation of the Berliner Arbeitskreis; for a discussion of the Greek *Vorlage* of this saying, see Excursus I.

<sup>36</sup> Munck 1959–1960, 106.

<sup>37</sup> Valantasis 2000, 74.

us?” Jesus seems to give a straightforward answer to this question by announcing the name of his successor: “wherever you come from,” i.e. regardless of your native land and the faith of you forefathers, it is James the Just, Ἰακώβος πᾶδικαῖος (the Greek *Vorlage* most certainly read Ἰάκωβος ὁ δίκαιος), to whom you should go. James’ epithet, ὁ δίκαιος (“the just/righteous one”), is well-attested in early Christian sources and is always used as an honorary epithet. It occurs already in Hegesippus, who claims that James has been called ὁ δίκαιος “since the time of the Lord” and that this epithet was given to him “because of his excessive righteousness” (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.23.4 and 7; trans. R. J. Deferrari). Jesus also says that James the Just is the one “for whose sake (ἐγὼν τῷ) heaven and earth came into being.” This expression certainly refers to the exalted status of James and has numerous parallels. According to various early Jewish and early Christian sources, the world was created for the sake of Israel (As. Mos., 1:12; 4 Ezra, 6:55, 59; 7:11), for the sake of the righteous (2 Bar., 14:19; 15:7; 21:24), or for the sake of the church (Herm. Vis. 1.1.6 [1:6]; Herm. Vis. 2.4.1 [8:1]).<sup>38</sup> To sum up, if we disregard the context of and read *Thomas* 12 as an isolated text, this saying appears to regard James in high esteem.

The situation changes drastically when we approach saying 12 as a part of *Thomas*. As Uro has pointed out, there is “a tension between the basic thrust of *Gos. Thom.* 12 and some central theological emphases of *Thomas* found elsewhere in the gospel.”<sup>39</sup> First of all, a need for leadership expressed by the disciples reveals their ignorance. As Antti Marjanen notes, the ultimate goal of spiritual progress, according to *Thomas*, is to become “masterless.”<sup>40</sup> Jesus exhorts people to become like him (see *Thomas* 108), not to follow him. In the saying that immediately follows *Thomas* 12, Jesus says to Thomas, the only disciple who has the full understanding of his teaching, “I am not your teacher/master (παιδαγῶγος)” (*Thomas* 13:5), implying that he and Thomas are equals. Thus, the very premise of the question that the disciples ask Jesus in *Thomas* 12 is flawed, for it implies that Jesus is their leader and that, after he is gone, someone else must replace him. The disciples are unaware of the fact that Jesus expects them to be masterless. Saying 12, as it were, exposes their ignorance.<sup>41</sup>

Second, the words that Jesus says about James become much less flattering when we consider them against their Thomasine background. It turns out that there is nothing spectacular about the world that came into being for James’ sake. As Uro has pointed out,<sup>42</sup> sayings 11 and 12 are connected by the catchword πῆ, “heaven.” While, according to *Thomas* 12, heaven (τῆ) and earth came into being for the sake of James the Just, in the preceding saying Jesus says that “this heaven (τῆ) will pass away, and the (heaven) above it will pass away” (*Thomas* 11:1). Saying 11 resonates with another saying: “The heavens and the earth will be rolled up in your presence” (*Thomas* 111:1; trans. T.O. Lambdin). This latter saying, in turn, shares its anti-cosmic sentiment with *Thomas* 56 and 80, where Jesus claims that the one who recognizes the unworthiness of the world is worthier than the world itself.<sup>43</sup> Thus, the Thomasine sentiment toward the world, just as its sentiment toward leadership and authority, are hardly positive.

<sup>38</sup> This motif is also attested in the rabbinic sources; see Ginzberg 1909–1928, 5:67–8.

<sup>39</sup> Uro 2003, 87.

<sup>40</sup> See Marjanen 1998c, 90.

<sup>41</sup> It is worth noting that the motif of the disciples’ ignorance is present throughout *Thomas*: see, e.g., sayings 18, 43, 51, 52, and 113.

<sup>42</sup> See Uro 2003, 86.

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed discussion of these two sayings, see chapter 5.

In sum, the context of *Thomas* 12:2 suggests that Jesus' description of James is not one of praise, but rather one of caustic irony.<sup>44</sup> While those who lack hermeneutical acumen would take this statement at its face value, an insightful reader would immediately recognize the disciples as ignorant and Jesus' reply to their inquiry for a successor replete with irony. To be sure, there is nothing great about this world and, therefore, nothing great about the man for whose sake this world came into being.

We can draw several conclusions from the "mixed signals" of *Thomas* 12. It seems reasonable to surmise that *Thomas* in its present form could not have been the original *Sitz im Leben* of saying 12. What, then, was its original *Sitz im Leben*? Ultimately, there are two possible answers. Saying 12 could have been part of *Thomas* from the very beginning, in which case it belongs to an early redactional layer of the text, to something that we might call a "Proto"-*Thomas*.<sup>45</sup> Presumably, this "Proto"-*Thomas* regarded James in high esteem; later, however, when the text obtained a new editorial layer, the attitude towards James changed drastically. Alternatively, saying 12 could have originated from a different source, one sympathetic to James, but that eventually made its way into *Thomas*.

Having sketched out the "conflicting evidence" and "mixed signals" in *Thomas*, I now turn to the hypotheses that might explain these phenomena. Two possible scenarios explain the compositional history of *Thomas*: either the text of *Thomas* was produced within a limited period of time, or the text was produced over a long period of time. The latter option was first suggested by R. McL. Wilson, who proposed that the text of *Thomas* grew "with the passing of time."<sup>46</sup> Wilson was following in the footsteps of Henry Chadwick, who wrote on the Sentences of Sextus: "collections of this kind come to possess the qualities of a snowball."<sup>47</sup> Similar ideas have recently been expressed by Hurtado who noted that "it may be inappropriate to think of a single act of composition," since *Thomas* "may be the product of multiple redactions, or perhaps even a process of agglutination like a rolling snowball."<sup>48</sup> From the standpoint of this "growing collection" hypothesis, saying 12 together with the Synoptic-resembling sayings that seem to be independent from the Synoptic tradition would probably belong to the earlier stages of the compositional history of *Thomas*, while the sayings that depend on the Synoptic gospels would be considered later additions.

The alternative to the "growing collection" hypothesis might be dubbed the "single-step composition" hypothesis. This hypothesis regards *Thomas* as the result of a single act of composition by a single author. Since, as we have seen, the bulk of Thomasine material has parallels in other early Christian texts and thus in most cases did not seem to originate with *Thomas*, the author of *Thomas* must have had access to multiple sources. From the standpoint of this "single-step composition" hypothesis, saying 12 would probably be seen as a borrowing from an unknown Jewish-Christian source and the Synoptic-resembling sayings as borrowings from the Synoptic gospels or the sources dependent upon them, as well as from the sources that were independent of the Synoptics.

It should be added that one can easily imagine a scenario that would combine certain elements of the two hypotheses: it is possible, for instance, that *Thomas* was, in fact, a product of a single act of composition, but that one of the sources utilized by its author was a growing collection like the

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. Dunderberg 2006, 193.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Patterson 1993, 116–7.

<sup>46</sup> Wilson 1960, 231.

<sup>47</sup> Chadwick 1959, 159.

<sup>48</sup> Hurtado 2003, 453.



Sentences of Sextus. The problem with all these hypothetical scenarios is that there seems to be no methodologically sound procedure that would allow us to make definitive conclusions with regard to the compositional history of *Thomas*. Whereas one of these hypotheses must be true, it seems impossible to determine which that one is.

This being the case, it seems reasonable to focus on the version of *Thomas* that is attested by its extant textual witnesses. Obviously, both the Greek fragments of *Thomas* (P.Oxy. 1, P.Oxy. 654, and P.Oxy. 655) and the Greek *Vorlage* of the Coptic *Thomas* from NHC II go back to a common prototype. From this point onward, it is this textual prototype that I call *Thomas*.

There seems to be no reason to discard any of these four witnesses to the text of *Thomas* as unreliable, since there is clearly a general agreement between the Greek fragments and the Coptic version, both in the form of the individual sayings and in their sequence.<sup>49</sup> While the disagreements between our witnesses indicate that occasionally at least one witness deviates from its prototype, these disagreements are minor, suggesting that the transmission of the text of *Thomas* was relatively stable and that our textual witnesses are more or less trustworthy.

I would like to underline the fact that it is the *Vorlage* of the Coptic version that is to be considered a witness to the text of *Thomas*, since the Coptic text as it stands quite often does not make good sense and appears to be either a clumsy or even erroneous rendering of the Greek original.<sup>50</sup> It is also clear that in certain instances the text became corrupt after its translation into Coptic: for instance, the Coptic version of *Thomas* 6 reads ⲙⲡⲉⲙⲧⲟ ⲉⲃⲟⲗ ⲛⲧⲡⲉ, “in the sight of heaven,” while the Greek text according to P.Oxy. 654.9–10 reads [ἐνώπιον τῆς ἀληθ[ε]ρας, “in the sight of truth.” It is plausible that, as was suggested already by the first editors of *Thomas*,<sup>51</sup> the former reading came about because the copyist mistook ⲙⲉ, “truth,” for ⲡⲉ, “heaven.” Thus, the *Vorlage* of the Coptic version agrees with P.Oxy. 654 and appears to be a faithful witness to the text of *Thomas* 6. It is possible, therefore, that in some cases the Coptic version deviates from its textual prototype, while its Greek *Vorlage*, if reconstructed properly, accurately reproduces the text of *Thomas*.

It might be tempting to suppose that the readings of the Oxyrhynchus fragments have priority over those of NHC II by default, since the Coptic *Thomas* is a translation and since NHC II postdates all three of the Greek fragments. Indeed, there are several instances of disagreement between the Coptic text and the Greek fragments where the reading of an Oxyrhynchus fragment is to be considered original and the reading of NHC II secondary.<sup>52</sup> Yet there is at least one saying, *Thomas* 5, which appears to be a case where NHC II has priority over an Oxyrhynchus fragment (for a discussion of saying 5, see Excursus II). It is fairly clear, therefore, that in order to establish the original text of *Thomas*, we must approach each saying individually.

Unfortunately, the portions of the Greek text preserved by the Oxyrhynchus fragments are relatively small, so in the cases where a saying is attested only by NHC II, we must rely on rational conjecture and parallels from other sources when available.<sup>53</sup> I must add that there is no need to lose heart or to become hypercritical in the instances wherein NHC II is the only witness to a Thomasine

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. Kloppenborg 2014, 207.

<sup>50</sup> For a clumsy translation of the original Greek text, see the discussion of saying 12 in Excursus I; for an erroneous one, see the discussion of *Thomas* 7:2 in chapter 10.

<sup>51</sup> See Guillaumont et al. 1959, 4.

<sup>52</sup> See, e.g., the discussion of the saying about splitting wood and lifting stones in chapter 6.

<sup>53</sup> For an example of rational conjecture, see the discussion of *Thomas* 12:2 in Excursus I; for an emendation based on the testimony of an independent witness to a saying, see the discussion of *Thomas* 7:2 in chapter 10.

saying; as I have already pointed out, the general agreement between the Oxyrhynchus fragments and the *Vorlage* of the Coptic version suggests that the latter appears to be a reliable witness to the text of *Thomas*. The fact that, at least in one instance, the reading of the Coptic version is prior to the parallel reading of a Greek fragment also supports the trustworthiness of the Coptic *Thomas*.

To conclude the discussion of the date of *Thomas* and to sum up the results, if *Thomas* is to be understood as the prototype of both NHC II and the three Oxyrhynchus fragments, then the most reliable *terminus ante quem* appears to be the date of the earliest textual witness; as I have pointed out above, the earliest witness to the text of *Thomas* is P.Oxy. 1, commonly dated to the early third century CE. As for the *terminus a quo*, since some of the Thomasine sayings are dependent on the Synoptic gospels, *Thomas* must postdate the Synoptics. Thus the *terminus a quo* of *Thomas* is the end of the first century.

The following argument proposed by Ismo Dunderberg also supports the claim that *Thomas* is post-Synoptic: it is evident that, while the Synoptic gospels are anonymous compositions,<sup>54</sup> *Thomas*, like the Gospel of John, is a pseudonymous one. As Dunderberg points out, both of these two texts are attributed to the disciples of Jesus (Thomas and the Beloved Disciple, respectively) in order to authenticate their contents. This phenomenon is known generally as “authorial fiction”<sup>55</sup> and is most likely to be explained by the fact that *Thomas* and John needed to gain advantage over competing Jesus traditions. The Synoptic gospels do not seem to be affected by this struggle for authentication and thus belong to an earlier historical period. I cite the following passage in full, since it conveniently summarizes Dunderberg’s findings:

My conclusions on the relationship between the Gospel of John and the *Gospel of Thomas* lend support to the view that neither of these gospels, at least in their extant forms, can be dated very early in the first century CE. The way authenticating figures are presented in these gospels connects them with Christian writings that are later than the earliest gospels, in which such ascriptions are missing. However, in John and *Thomas* authorial fiction took less concrete forms than in some other early Christian writings. This indicates that they still stood at the threshold of this development, which gradually led to the increasingly detailed authentication of early Christian pseudepigraphical texts.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, the composition of *Thomas* should be located somewhere between the late first and early third centuries CE. Admittedly, many might find this conclusion rather disappointing, but it does not seem possible to arrive at a more precise date. Moreover, this conclusion seems to suffice for the purposes of the present dissertation.

The proposed date of *Thomas* makes this text roughly contemporary with the wide range of Greco-Roman intellectuals and philosophical schools. Moreover, *Thomas* was written in Greek, the main language of the philosophical enterprise in the ancient world. Hence, there seems to be no reason to deny the possibility of the influence of the philosophical traditions on *Thomas*. The goal of this dissertation is, then, to demonstrate that such an influence was not only possible, but in fact very likely. It should be noted, however, that to some extent the interaction between *Thomas* and

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<sup>54</sup> See, e.g., Aland 1961, 41–2; Sanders and Davies 1996, 13–5; Brown 1997, 585.

<sup>55</sup> Dunderberg borrows this term from Kloppenborg 1987, 274–5.

<sup>56</sup> Dunderberg 2006, 204.

philosophy has already been discussed in scholarly literature. The following chapter offers a short survey of this avenue of research.

## Excursus I. The Greek *Vorlage* of *Thomas* 12:2

In chapter 1, I have dealt with the “mixed signals” of saying 12. It is worth noting that the text of this saying appears to be problematic. Since the analysis of *Thomas* 12 plays an important role in my discussion of the date and compositional history of *Thomas*, it seems justified to give here a treatment of the problems related to the text of this saying, especially since my translation of it deviates from that of the Berliner Arbeitskreis.

The expression  $\pi\mu\alpha \text{ } \pi\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\epsilon\iota \text{ } \bar{\mu}\mu\alpha\gamma$ , “(the place) where<sup>57</sup> you came from,” in *Thomas* 12:2 is problematic. Quite remarkably, the Berliner Arbeitskreis offers two different interpretations of this phrase. In the first edition of their translation of *Thomas*, they suggested that  $\pi\mu\alpha$  renders the Greek expression  $\delta\pi\omicron\upsilon \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu$ , as it does in the Sahidic translation of Matt 8:19. According to their hypothesis, in the Greek *Vorlage*  $\delta\pi\omicron\upsilon \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu$  was followed by a verb in the aorist subjunctive, which was probably confused with the aorist in the indicative and thus rendered as the Coptic perfect. Assuming that  $\bar{\mu}\mu\alpha\gamma$  should be understood as  $\epsilon\mu\alpha\gamma$ ,<sup>58</sup> they suggested the following rendering of  $\pi\mu\alpha \text{ } \pi\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\epsilon\iota \text{ } \bar{\mu}\mu\alpha\gamma$ : “Wherever you will have come to.” This is essentially a translation not of the Coptic text, but of its Greek retroversion,  $\delta\pi\omicron\upsilon \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu \text{ } \epsilon\lambda\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$ .<sup>59</sup>

It did not take long before this hypothesis was revised. According to the second, and much more appealing, proposal of the Berliner Arbeitskreis,  $\epsilon\iota \text{ } \bar{\mu}\mu\alpha\gamma$  in *Thomas* 12:2 stands in contrast to  $\beta\alpha\kappa \text{ } \tau\alpha$ , “to go to,” and thus should express the idea of “coming from.” Indeed, there are reasons to suspect that  $\bar{\mu}\mu\alpha\gamma$  can be used as an equivalent of  $\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \text{ } \eta\eta\tau\epsilon$  or  $\epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \text{ } \bar{\mu}\mu\alpha\gamma$ .<sup>60</sup> Thus, the definitive English translation of *Thomas* 12 prepared by the Berliner Arbeitskreis (and slightly modified by Stephen J. Patterson and James M. Robinson) reads as follows:<sup>61</sup>

12:1 The disciples said to Jesus: “We know that you will depart from us. Who (then) will rule over us?” 12:2 Jesus said to them: “(No matter) where you came from, you should go to James the Just for whose sake heaven and earth came into being.”

Yet the text of *Thomas* 12:2 remains problematic for several reasons. First, the subordinate clause  $\pi\mu\alpha \text{ } \pi\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\epsilon\iota \text{ } \bar{\mu}\mu\alpha\gamma$  is not linked to any element of the main clause and thus is seemingly “hanging” onto nothing.<sup>62</sup> One could argue that this indicates that the Coptic text is corrupt and needs to be emended. Moreover, an examination of a similar anomaly in the Sahidic version of Matt 18:20 may seem to lend support to such a claim:

<sup>57</sup> For  $\pi\mu\alpha$  expanded by a relative clause constituting a subordinate “where”-clause, see Layton 2011, 429 (§522).

<sup>58</sup> It is worth noting that the substitution of  $\epsilon\mu\alpha\gamma$  with  $\bar{\mu}\mu\alpha\gamma$  is a rare and late phenomenon; see Crum 1939, 197a.

<sup>59</sup> See Aland 1996, 522; Plisch 1999, 526.

<sup>60</sup> See Plisch 1998, 77; Bethge 1998, 45.

<sup>61</sup> Patterson 2011b, 3; cf. Aland 1997, 522. This understanding of the Coptic text of *Thomas* 12:2 was embraced in Nagel 2014, 113.

<sup>62</sup> A similar phenomenon also occurs in *Thomas* 30:1–2, but, since the text of saying 30 is even more problematic than that of saying 12, it will be left out of the following discussion.

Matt 18:20 (NA<sup>28</sup>)

οὗ γάρ εἰσιν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ  
ἐμὸν ὄνομα, ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν

## Matt 18:20 (sa 2)

ⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲥⲛⲁϣ ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲧ ⲥⲟⲟϥ ⲛⲉⲩⲏⲧϣ ⲉⲡⲁⲣⲁⲛ  
ⲧⲁⲟⲟⲡ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϣ ϣⲛ ⲧⲉϥⲙⲏⲧⲉ<sup>63</sup>

Here, the first part of the Sahidic sentence, ⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲥⲛⲁϣ ⲛ ⲟⲩⲙⲧ ⲥⲟⲟϥ ⲛⲉⲩⲏⲧϣ ⲉⲡⲁⲣⲁⲛ, “(the place) where two or three are gathered in my name,” is not connected to its second part, ⲧⲁⲟⲟⲡ ⲛⲉⲙⲁϣ ϣⲛ ⲧⲉϥⲙⲏⲧⲉ, “I am with them in their midst.” A comparison of the Greek text of Matt 18:20 with its Sahidic version demonstrates that this anomaly is the result of a scribal error. There is nothing in the Sahidic text that corresponds to the Greek adverb ἐκεῖ (“there”); similarly, ⲛⲉⲙⲁϣ (“with them”) in the Sahidic text does not have a Greek equivalent. Since the usual Coptic equivalent of ἐκεῖ is ⲛⲙⲁϣ (“there”), there can be no doubt that the original reading of the Sahidic version of Matt 18:20 was ⲛⲙⲁϣ, which was later on corrupted to ⲛⲉⲙⲁϣ. The corruption of ⲛⲙⲁϣ to ⲛⲉⲙⲁϣ must have happened relatively early in the history of the textual transmission of the Sahidic New Testament, since the reading ⲛⲙⲁϣ in Matt 18:20 does not seem to be attested in any of the published manuscripts.

Yet while the “loose” ⲡⲙⲁ-clause appeared in Matt 18:20 because of a scribal error, it does not necessarily hold true for *Thomas* 12:2. It is quite telling that the manuscripts containing the Sahidic version of Matt 18:20 do not witness any attempts to alter the text, which means that the copyists had no difficulties with the “loose” ⲡⲙⲁ-clause. In other words, the fact that the main clause is not connected to the subordinate ⲡⲙⲁ-clause does not render the sentence ungrammatical. This conclusion is corroborated by my second example, 2 Pet 2:11, where the “loose” ⲡⲙⲁ-clause is not the result of a scribal error, but rather that of the translator’s literalist approach:

2 Pet 2:11 (NA<sup>28</sup>)

ὅπου ἄγγελοι ἰσχύι καὶ δυνάμει μείζονες  
ὄντες οὐ φέρουσιν κατ’ αὐτῶν παρὰ κυρίου  
βλάσφημον κρίσιν

## 2 Pet 2:11 (sa 33)

ⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲛⲉⲁⲓⲧⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲟ ⲛⲛⲟⲥ ⲛⲉⲩⲏⲧϣ ϣⲛ ⲟϥⲥⲟⲙ ⲛⲛⲛ  
ⲟϥⲙⲏⲧⲭⲱⲣⲉ ⲙⲉϥⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲭⲱϣ ⲛⲛⲟϥⲁⲗⲁⲡ ⲛⲟϥⲁ<sup>64</sup>

Once again, the first part of the Sahidic sentence, ⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲣⲉⲛⲉⲁⲓⲧⲉⲗⲟⲥ (i.e. ⲉⲧⲉⲣⲉⲛⲉⲁⲓⲧⲉⲗⲟⲥ)<sup>65</sup> ⲟ ⲛⲛⲟⲥ ⲛⲉⲩⲏⲧϣ ϣⲛ ⲟϥⲥⲟⲙ ⲛⲛⲛ (i.e. ⲛⲛ)<sup>66</sup> ⲟϥⲙⲏⲧⲭⲱⲣⲉ, “(the place) where the angels are great in power and strength,” is not linked with its second part, ⲙⲉϥⲓⲛⲉ ⲉⲭⲱϣ ⲛⲛⲟϥⲁⲗⲁⲡ (i.e. ⲛⲟϥⲁⲗⲁⲡ)<sup>67</sup> ⲛⲟϥⲁ, “they never bring upon them a blasphemous judgement.” In this case, however, there seems to be no scribal error.<sup>68</sup> How, then, do we explain the anomaly? It seems reasonable to surmise that the Coptic translator did not realize that ὅπου in 2 Pet 2:11 means “whereas” and rendered it the way the adverbs of place are often rendered, as ⲡⲙⲁ. As a result, he produced a sentence that does not seem to flow

<sup>63</sup> Kasser 1962, 86.

<sup>64</sup> Schüssler 1991, 1:27–8; see also Schmitz 2003, 415–6.

<sup>65</sup> See Schüssler 1991, 1:xliv and lv.

<sup>66</sup> See Schüssler 1991, 1:liv and 82.

<sup>67</sup> See Schüssler 1991, 1:liv and lvii.

<sup>68</sup> The Coptic text closely corresponds to what we have in Greek with only one exception: it has no equivalent for *παρὰ* κυρίου, which is also the case with several Greek witnesses to the text of 2 Pet 2:11; see the apparatus in NA<sup>28</sup> *ad loc.*

well from the previous text, but in a sense is a faithful, albeit overly literal, translation of the Greek original.

The two parallels that I have discussed above demonstrate that the “loose”  $\pi\mu\alpha$ -clause in *Thomas* 12:2 is not an unprecedented phenomenon in the Coptic texts translated from Greek. The “loose”  $\pi\mu\alpha$ -clause did not seem to bother the Coptic translator of 2 Pet 2:11. Moreover, both Matt 18:20 and 2 Pet 2:11 were considered grammatical by the scribes who continuously copied them without alterations. While the comparison with the Greek text demonstrates that in the Sahidic version of Matt 18:20 the “loose”  $\pi\mu\alpha$ -clause occurred because of a scribal error, the clause itself does not indicate that the text is ungrammatical. My first conclusion is thus that the presence of the “loose”  $\pi\mu\alpha$ -clause in *Thomas* 12:2 does not mean that this text requires emendation.

I now turn to a discussion of the Greek *Vorlage* of *Thomas* 12:2. In the Sahidic New Testament,  $\pi\mu\alpha$  often renders an adverb of place:  $\delta\pi\sigma\upsilon$ ,  $\sigma\upsilon$ ,  $\delta\theta\epsilon\nu$ , etc.<sup>69</sup> This is also the case with *Thomas* 30:1–2. Unfortunately, the Coptic text of this saying is extremely problematic, the Greek text preserved in P.Oxy. 1.23–7 has suffered serious damage, and the relationship between the two is unclear, since there are several significant differences between the two texts.<sup>70</sup> It is clear, however, that, just like in the Sahidic version of 2 Pet 2:11,  $\pi\mu\alpha$  in *Thomas* 30:1 and *Thomas* 30:2 renders Greek  $\delta\pi\sigma\upsilon$ .

It follows from these two examples that  $\pi\mu\alpha$  in saying 12 likely corresponds to a Greek adverb of place. If, as the Berliner Arbeitskreis argues,  $\bar{\pi}\mu\alpha\gamma$  in *Thomas* 12:2 is an equivalent of  $\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\lambda\ \bar{\pi}\mu\alpha\gamma$ , we might conclude that behind the phrase  $\pi\mu\alpha\ \eta\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\epsilon\bar{\iota}\ \bar{\pi}\mu\alpha\gamma$  lies something like  $\delta\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu\ \eta\lambda\theta\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ , “where you came from.” This phrase, however, hardly makes good sense in the context of saying 12: note the parenthetical words the Berliner Arbeitskreis inserts into their translation in order to make the English text coherent.

It is tempting to suppose that the original Greek text of *Thomas* 12:2 meant something along the lines of what the Berliner Arbeitskreis has suggested; in this case we must surmise that  $\pi\mu\alpha\ \eta\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\epsilon\bar{\iota}\ \bar{\pi}\mu\alpha\gamma$  is a clumsy translation of a Greek idiom. Which idiom could that be? Translating *Thomas* back into Greek is certainly an ungrateful task, yet in this particular instance, in order to make sense of *Thomas* 12:2, it is necessary at least to make an attempt to reconstruct the original Greek text and to propose a scenario that would explain the emergence of  $\pi\mu\alpha\ \eta\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\epsilon\bar{\iota}\ \bar{\pi}\mu\alpha\gamma$ .

The second retroversion suggested by the Berliner Arbeitskreis is  $\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu\ \epsilon\lambda\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$ .<sup>71</sup> This retroversion is hardly plausible, since  $\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu$  is an interrogative adverb. Moreover, the relative clause that employs the subjunctive mood usually requires the particle  $\delta\upsilon$ .<sup>72</sup> I would, therefore, suggest that the Greek text behind  $\pi\mu\alpha\ \eta\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\epsilon\bar{\iota}\ \bar{\pi}\mu\alpha\gamma$  is  $\delta\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu\ \delta\upsilon\ \epsilon\lambda\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$ , “wherever you come from”; cf.  $\eta\gamma\acute{\iota}\kappa\alpha\ \delta\upsilon\ \epsilon\lambda\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$  (Judg 18:10 LXX), “whenever you go.” If  $\pi\mu\alpha\ \eta\tau\alpha\tau\epsilon\tau\eta\epsilon\bar{\iota}\ \bar{\pi}\mu\alpha\gamma$  indeed corresponds to  $\delta\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu\ \delta\upsilon\ \epsilon\lambda\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$  of the *Vorlage*, then we may surmise that the Coptic translator struggled with the Greek syntax of *Thomas* 12:2 and came up with only an approximate translation.

To complete the picture, I suggest an alternative scenario: it is also possible that the Greek text available to the translator was corrupt and indeed read  $\delta\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu\ \eta\lambda\theta\epsilon\tau\epsilon$ , “where you came from,” instead

<sup>69</sup> See Wilmet 1957–1959, 1:314–24; cf. Crum 1939, 154b.

<sup>70</sup> For an attempt to resolve some of the difficulties pertaining to this saying see Attridge 1979; see also chapter 5, below.

<sup>71</sup> See Plisch 2008, 60. Curiously enough, the retroversion of this phrase in Aland 1997, 522 is identical with that of Aland 1996, 522 ( $\delta\pi\sigma\upsilon\ \delta\upsilon\ \epsilon\lambda\theta\eta\tau\epsilon$ ), which seems to be due to an oversight.

<sup>72</sup> See, e.g., Moulton and Turner 1963, 107.

of *ὅποθεν ἂν ἔλθῃτε*. According to this scenario, at some point *ἔλθῃτε* was confused with *ἦλθετε*, whereas *ἂν* was omitted due to a homoeoteleuton.

While both of these scenarios start from unverifiable assumptions, i.e. either a somewhat incompetent scribe or a corrupt Greek manuscript, they at least shed some light on what could have brought about the phrasing of *Thomas* 12:2. I propose, therefore, that *Thomas* 12:2 originally read *ὅποθεν ἂν ἔλθῃτε*, “wherever you come from,” which agrees with the basic premise of the second translation proposed by the Berliner Arbeitskreis. The Coptic text that we have, *ⲡⲙⲁ ⲛⲧⲁⲧⲉⲧⲛⲉⲓ ⲛⲙⲁϥ*, “the place where you came from,” is either a clumsy translation of the original reading, or an accurate rendering of a corrupt one, which could have been *ὅποθεν ἦλθετε*.

## Excursus II. The Secondary Nature of *Thomas* 5:3

In chapter 1, I pointed out that when the readings of NHC II and the Oxyrhynchus fragments differ, we do not always have to take the reading preserved by the Oxyrhynchus fragments to be the more original one. In this excursus, I will argue that *Thomas* 5 presents us with a case where NHC II has priority over P.Oxy. 654. One difference between the two witnesses to the text of saying 5 is quite remarkable: whereas P.Oxy. 654 includes *Thomas* 5:3, NHC II omits the entire verse. In what follows, I will demonstrate that the Coptic version preserves the original text of the saying and that the extra verse in P.Oxy. 654 is a secondary development.

### *Thomas* 5 (NHC II)

- 5:1a πεχε ιϥ ρε  
 5:1b σογων πετῑπῑτο ἡπεκρο εβολ  
 5:1c αγω πεθηπ εροκ  
 5:1d ϣηαδωλπ εβολ ηακ  
 5:2a ηῃ λααγ γαρ ερηηπ  
 5:2b ερηαογωνη εβολ αν

### *Thomas* 5 (P.Oxy. 654)

- 5:1a λέγει Ἰη(σοῦ)ς·  
 5:1b γ[νῶθι τὸ ὄν ἔμπροσ]θεν τῆς ὀψεώς σου,  
 5:1c καὶ [τὸ κεκρυμμένον]<sup>73</sup> ἀπὸ σου  
 5:1d ἀποκαλυφ<θ>ήσεται[αὶ σοι·]  
 5:2a [οὐ γάρ ἐσ]τιν κρυπτὸν  
 5:2b ὃ οὐ φανε[ρὸν γενήσεται],  
 5:3a καὶ θεθαμμένον<sup>74</sup>  
 5:3b ὃ ο[ὐκ ἐγε]ρθήσεται<sup>75</sup>

- 5:1a Jesus said,  
 5:1b “Recognize what is in your (sg.) sight,  
 5:1c and that which is hidden from you (sg.)  
 5:1d will become plain to you (sg.).  
 5:2a For there is nothing hidden  
 5:2b that will not become manifest.”<sup>76</sup>

- 5:1a Jesus said,  
 5:1b “[Recognize what is in] your (sg.) sight,  
 5:1c and [that which is hidden] from you (sg.)  
 5:1d will become plain [to you (sg.).]  
 5:2a [For there is nothing] hidden  
 5:2b which [will] not [become] manifest,  
 5:3a nor buried  
 5:3b that [will not be raised].”

<sup>73</sup> This restoration presupposes that ϣηη in *Thomas* 5:1c and *Thomas* 5:2a corresponds to two cognate words in the Greek text; cf. Johnson 2010, 325–6. The restoration preferred in Attridge 1989a, 115, [τὸ κεκαλυμμένον], is less likely, since the usual Coptic equivalent of the Greek verb καλύπτω and its cognates is ϣωβϥ; see, e.g., the Sahidic version of Matt 10:26.

<sup>74</sup> Read τεθαμμένον.

<sup>75</sup> This restoration is supported by the parallel text from a funerary shroud published in Puech 1955, 127: λέγει Ἰησοῦς· οὐκ ἔστιν τεθαμμένον ὃ οὐκ ἐγερθήσεται, “Jesus says: ‘There is nothing buried that will not be raised.’” According to Luijendijk 2011, 390, the present whereabouts of the shroud are unknown. The only image of it is published as the frontispiece of Puech 1978.

<sup>76</sup> The translation is that of Thomas O. Lambdin, since Attridge’s translation of the Greek fragments is adapted to Lambdin’s translation of the Coptic text.



A hidden/revealed saying similar to that of *Thomas* 5:1c–2b is attested in the Synoptic gospels (Mark 4:22; Matt 10:26; Luke 8:17 and 12:2). Scholars have long realized that *Thomas* 5:3a–b, the resurrection strophe, was a secondary expansion of the saying.<sup>77</sup> It is worth noting, however, that, whereas this strophe is not a part of the original hidden/revealed saying, it may still have been a part of the original *Thomas*. On this latter issue, scholars have postulated different scenarios. Some have argued that the resurrection strophe was added to saying 5 at some point of the textual transmission of *Thomas*.<sup>78</sup> Others have suggested that P.Oxy. 654 preserved the original text of the saying. Of this latter camp of scholars, some have thought that the resurrection strophe was deliberately deleted by a later editor.<sup>79</sup> Others have argued that a copyist could have accidentally omitted it due to a homoeoteleuton (γενήσεται ... ἐγερθήσεται).<sup>80</sup> Finally, AnneMarie Luijendijk believes that it is impossible to ascertain whether the resurrection strophe was omitted from or added to the original text of *Thomas*.<sup>81</sup>

It is hard to disagree with Luijendijk: caution is always appropriate in matters pertaining to textual criticism. Steven R. Johnson’s recent attempt to solve the problem of *Thomas* 5:3a–b is a nice illustration of the fact that you can never be too careful. According to Johnson, it is NHC II that preserves the original Thomasine reading, since the scenario in which the resurrection strophe was added to the original *Thomas* is much easier to imagine than the alternative. In this case, we simply presume that *Thomas* originally contained the hidden/revealed saying similar to the one attested by the Synoptics and that, at some point, this Thomasine saying was supplemented by the resurrection strophe. The alternative scenario is much more complicated, since, in this case, “one must postulate *two* stages of redaction: the insertion of the resurrection strophe at some point of time in the transmission history of the Gospel of Thomas, as reflected in Greek Thomas 5; and its subsequent omission at a later date, as represented by Coptic Thomas 5.”<sup>82</sup>

While the argument by principle of *lex parsimoniae* is perfectly acceptable—indeed, as Morton Smith put it, history is “the most probable account of what happened”<sup>83</sup>—it does not seem to apply in this particular situation. Johnson’s argument does not seem to work, because both of his proposed scenarios presuppose two redactional stages. Even if *Thomas* 5:3a–b were a later expansion of the text, *Thomas* 5:1a–b cannot be, since it is present both in NHC II and P.Oxy. 654. Because the Synoptic parallels do not have anything that would resemble *Thomas* 5:1a–b, they must belong to the Thomasine redaction. Hence, according to one scenario, the first stage of redaction was the insertion of *Thomas* 5:1a–b and the second the insertion of *Thomas* 5:3a–b; according to another scenario, the first stage of redaction was the insertion of *Thomas* 5:1a–b and *Thomas* 5:3a–b and the second the omission of *Thomas* 5:3a–b.

<sup>77</sup> See, e.g., Jeremias 1958, 16; Bultmann 1972, 91 and 94; Fitzmyer 1974, 383–4.

<sup>78</sup> See, e.g., Grobel 1961–1962, 368–9; Marcovich 1988, 67–8; Patterson 1993, 21; Riley 1995, 165–7; DeConick 2007, 60.

<sup>79</sup> See, e.g., Mueller 1973, 269; Dunderberg 2006, 62–3.

<sup>80</sup> See, e.g., Gärtner 1961, 83–4.

<sup>81</sup> Luijendijk 2013, 295: “Whether the longer form of the saying results from an ‘orthodox corruption’ of the *Gospel of Thomas* by addition of this phrase to a form of the saying as now preserved in NHC II, or whether the shorter Nag Hammadi reading is an abbreviation by a more spiritually-minded Christian, cannot be determined on the basis of the current evidence.”

<sup>82</sup> Johnson 2002, 178–9.

<sup>83</sup> Smith 1996, 1:4.

	Pre-Thomasine saying	First redaction (original <i>Thomas</i> )	Second redaction
Scenario #1	<i>Thomas</i> 5:1c–2b	+ <i>Thomas</i> 5:1a–b	+ <i>Thomas</i> 5:3a–b
Scenario #2	<i>Thomas</i> 5:1c–2b	+ <i>Thomas</i> 5:1a–b + <i>Thomas</i> 5:3a–b	– <i>Thomas</i> 5:3a–b

Thus, what is left of Johnson’s argument is an appeal to common sense: Scenario #2 appears to be a little suspicious, since it presupposes that the same strophe was first inserted and then omitted. Yet this hypothetical course of events is imaginable and cannot be dismissed without further argumentation to the contrary.

Nevertheless, I do not think that the situation is hopeless. I suggest that Scenario #1 is more likely and that the formal structure of saying 5 indicates that *Thomas* 5:3a–b was a secondary expansion. First, there can be little doubt that the Synoptic/pre-Thomasine version of the hidden/revealed saying has a parallel structure: hidden – manifest / hidden – manifest (A – B / A – B). The following synoptic table illustrates the structure of the saying according to *Thomas* 5:1c–2b and Matt 10:26:

	<i>Thomas</i> 5:1c–2b		Matt 10:26
A	5:1c καὶ [τὸ κεκρυμμένον] ἀπὸ σου	A	οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν κεκαλυμμένον
B	5:1d ἀποκαλυφ<θ>ήσεται[αἱ σοι ·]	B	ὃ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται
A	5:2a [οὐ γὰρ ἐσ]τιν κρυπτὸν	A	καὶ κρυπτὸν
B	5:2b ὃ οὐ φανε[ρὸν γενήσεται]	B	ὃ οὐ γνωσθήσεται

Once the hidden/revealed saying became a part of *Thomas* and was expanded by *Thomas* 5:1b, it could no longer retain the formal structure it had before. The redactor, however, did not destroy or disregard the parallelism of the saying; rather, he transformed it. Whereas in the pre-Thomasine version of the saying, *Thomas* 5:1c and *Thomas* 5:1d functioned as two opposing units, in *Thomas* they form a single unit: *Thomas* 5:1c–d. In this new parallel structure, *Thomas* 5:1c–d stands opposite to *Thomas* 5:1b, just as *Thomas* 5:2b stands opposite to *Thomas* 5:2a. As a result, the redactor came up with a chiasmic saying: come to know that which is *manifest* and you will know that which is *hidden*, for there is nothing *hidden* which will not become *manifest* (B – A / A – B).<sup>84</sup> The following table illustrates the new parallel structure of the saying:

<sup>84</sup> Chiasm appears to be one of the more frequently-used structural devices in *Thomas*. See the discussion in chapter 11.

- B 5:1b γ[νῶθι τὸ ὃν ἔμπροσ]θεν τῆς ὀψεώς σου,  
A 5:1c-d καὶ [τὸ κεκρυμμένον] ἀπὸ σου ἀποκαλυφ<θ>ήσεται[αἱ σοι·]  
A 5:2a [οὐ γάρ ἐσ]τιν κρυπτὸν  
B 5:2b ὃ οὐ φανε[ρὸν γενήσεται]

The fact that *Thomas* 5:1b–2b is a chiasm is crucial for the textual criticism of the saying. After the insertion of *Thomas* 5:1b, the saying acquired its chiasmic structure. *Thomas* 5:3a–b, the resurrection strophe, disturbs this chiasmic structure; hence, it seems reasonable to give preference to Scenario #1, which presupposes the insertion of *Thomas* 5:1a–b and *Thomas* 5:3a–b at two different redactional stages. Thus, *Thomas* 5:3a–b must be a later addition.

Moreover, it seems that the person who added the resurrection strophe to the saying did not recognize that it was a chiasm. Having ignored *Thomas* 5:1b, he disregarded the structural difference between the Thomasine and Synoptic versions of the hidden/revealed saying. Treating the Thomasine version of the saying as if it were formally identical with the Synoptic one (A – B / A – B), he inserted *Thomas* 5:3a–b as a third parallel unit, where being buried and being raised correspond to the being hidden and being manifest of the first two parallel members. As a result, he came up with the parallel structure (A – B – A / B – A – B) that follows *Thomas* 5:1a–b:

- 5:1a–b λέγει Ἰη(σοῦ)ς· γ[νῶθι τὸ ὃν ἔμπροσ]θεν τῆς ὀψεώς σου,  
A 5:1c καὶ [τὸ κεκρυμμένον] ἀπὸ σου  
B 5:1d ἀποκαλυφ<θ>ήσεται[αἱ σοι·]  
A 5:2a [οὐ γάρ ἐσ]τιν κρυπτὸν  
B 5:2b ὃ οὐ φανε[ρὸν γενήσεται],  
A 5:3a καὶ θεθαμμένον  
B 5:3b ὃ ο[ὐκ ἐγερθήσεται]

In sum, there were three stages in the development of the hidden/revealed saying: (1) the pre-Thomasine version, attested by the Synoptics; (2) the original Thomasine version, attested by NHC II; (3) the secondary expansion of the Thomasine text, attested by P.Oxy. 654. As this survey has demonstrated, saying 5 provides us with an example of the priority of the Coptic text over the Greek fragments of *Thomas*.

## 2. *Thomas* and Philosophy: A History of Research

While *Thomas* has never ceased to attract scholarly attention, and the academic publications on this early Christian text number in the thousands, there are very few studies related to the topic of *Thomas* and philosophy. This being the case, the following survey of research will be relatively short.

Four schools of ancient philosophy have been taken into account by the scholars of *Thomas*: Pythagoreanism, Cynicism, Stoicism, and Platonism. The affinities between *Thomas* and Pythagoreanism are outlined by John S. Kloppenborg in 1987. According to him, *Thomas* requires a type of hermeneutic similar to that of the Pythagorean σύμβολα and ἀκούσματα (see Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 8.17; Porphyry, *Vit. Pyth.* 42). The Pythagorean sayings, as Kloppenborg points out, “were formulated in a deliberately obscure fashion in order to prevent outsiders from understanding”;<sup>85</sup> just like the Thomasine sayings, they “require interpretation in order to become efficacious.”<sup>86</sup>

That *Thomas* demands the same sort of hermeneutic is evident from its incipit: “Whoever finds the meaning (ἑρμηνεία) of these words will not taste death.” The refrain “Whoever has ears to hear should hear” (sayings 8, 21, 24, 63, and 65) repeatedly reminds the reader of the importance of interpretation. Kloppenborg describes the hermeneutical procedure presupposed by the Thomasine and Pythagorean sayings as a process of “sapiential research.”<sup>87</sup> While Kloppenborg’s insights into the intended use of *Thomas* as sayings collection are certainly of great value, it is worth noting that the parallels he draws between the Thomasine and Pythagorean sayings are meant to expose their typological similarity and are not to be regarded as evidence of the Pythagorean influence on *Thomas*.

A case for affinities between Cynicism and *Thomas* 36 and 78 was presented by Stephen J. Patterson in 1993. Patterson understands saying 36 as an advice to the itinerant beggars “not to give much thought to dressing fashionably.”<sup>88</sup> Consequently, he argues, this saying contains “common secular wisdom promoting a position familiar especially in Cynic circles,” supporting this thesis with references to the Cynic epistles (Pseudo-Diogenes, *Ep.* 7 and 32; Pseudo-Crates, *Ep.* 9 and 30) and Seneca’s testimony for Demetrius (*Ep.* 20.9).<sup>89</sup>

Patterson detects similar affinities with Cynicism in saying 78, wherein Jesus contests the conventional wisdom that clothes make the man: “Why did you go out to the countryside? To see a reed shaken by the wind, and to see a man dressed in soft clothing [like your] kings and your persons of rank? They are the ones dressed in soft clothing and they will not be able to recognize the truth.” Patterson believes that this saying has “a sharp political edge”<sup>90</sup> and “reminds one of the sort of witty criticism of kingship heard among Cynics of the period, which tended to earn them the ire of the emperor and periodic expulsion from Rome”;<sup>91</sup> the parallel passages listed by Patterson include Pseudo-Crates, *Ep.* 23, and testimonies for Socrates (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 2.25), Diogenes (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.24.7), Demonax (Lucian, *Demon.* 41), and Peregrinus (Lucian, *Peregr.* 18).

It is fairly obvious, however, that the affinities between *Thomas* and Cynicism detected by Patterson are rather isolated and hardly warrant speculation about the Cynic influence on *Thomas*.

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<sup>85</sup> Kloppenborg 1987, 304–5.

<sup>86</sup> Kloppenborg 1987, 301.

<sup>87</sup> See Kloppenborg 1987, 305; cf. Kloppenborg 2014, 230.

<sup>88</sup> Patterson 1993, 139.

<sup>89</sup> Patterson 1993, 76.

<sup>90</sup> Patterson 1993, 150.

<sup>91</sup> Patterson 1993, 237.

Quite remarkably, John W. Marshall, the only scholar who went to the trouble of bringing *Thomas* into the discussion of the historical Jesus as a Cynic, did not list *Thomas* 36 and 78 among the sayings that suggest practices resembling those advocated by Cynics.<sup>92</sup> It is likely, therefore, that the similarities between these two sayings and Cynicism should be explained instead by the widespread ethos shared by various contemporary groups and individuals.

Even so, drawing an analogy between Thomasine theology and Cynic traditions may still be a worthwhile enterprise in that it would bring new insights and prevent us from making certain far-reaching conclusions. As Risto Uro has pointed out, the ethical radicalism that places *Thomas* in close quarters with the Cynic tradition does not necessarily point to the fact that *Thomas* was a product of the tradition of wandering charismatics. Cynic traditions of ethical radicalism were often transmitted “in circumstances that were neither ‘extreme’ nor ‘on the fringe of society.’”<sup>93</sup> Similarly, the radical overtones of sayings 36 and 78 may have nothing to do with the social reality behind *Thomas*.

An important landmark in the history of research on *Thomas* and Greco-Roman philosophy is the collection of essays by Uro published in 2003.<sup>94</sup> In this work, Uro acknowledges the Platonizing tendencies in *Thomas*: he speaks of “the general Platonic flavour of the gospel”<sup>95</sup> and admits that *Thomas* contains “a Platonic cosmology”<sup>96</sup> and “Platonic-Christian ideas about immortality and afterlife.”<sup>97</sup> Uro’s main concern, however, is the ideological affinities between *Thomas* and Stoicism. According to Uro, the Stoic “understanding of the body and the world comes surprisingly close to that expressed in *Thomas*.”<sup>98</sup> Uro argues that these affinities are present in sayings 56 and 80. According to these two sayings, the world is not worthy of those individuals who realize that it is a body (σῶμα) and a corpse (πτῶμα). In Uro’s view, while the idea that the world is a body was accepted by various schools, *Thomas* is remarkably similar specifically to Stoicism, since “Stoic philosophers could teach their students to regard their bodies as if they were dead.”<sup>99</sup> With these parallels in mind, Uro points out that from the Stoic point of view the body belongs to the realm of the “indifferents” (τὰ ἀδιάφορα = indifferentia), or “middle things” (τὰ μέσα = media), arguing that it is possible to read sayings 56 and 80 “as expressing *indifference*, rather than strong hostility with respect to the outside world” and that the metaphor of “the world as a corpse” could encourage “moderate or internalized detachment and not necessarily extreme asceticism.”<sup>100</sup>

Uro’s line of argument is nuanced and avoids any sweeping generalizations. He does not claim that Stoicism influenced *Thomas* in general or sayings 56 and 80 in particular; rather, he seems to argue that a Stoic-minded reader would have recognized the affinities between sayings 56 and 80 and certain Stoic concepts (i.e. that the world is a body and that bodies are corpses), interpreting these two sayings from a Stoic perspective. While we have no knowledge of the ancient Stoic-minded readers of *Thomas*, which means that Uro’s proposal is ultimately a thought experiment, it is certainly an important contribution to the overall discussion of the ancient readership of *Thomas*.

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<sup>92</sup> See Marshall 1997, 56–7.

<sup>93</sup> Uro 2006, 28.

<sup>94</sup> See Uro 2003.

<sup>95</sup> Uro 2003, 63.

<sup>96</sup> Uro 2003, 46.

<sup>97</sup> Uro 2003, 70.

<sup>98</sup> Uro 2003, 6.

<sup>99</sup> Uro 2003, 69.

<sup>100</sup> Uro 2003, 69 and 70.

I believe that Uro's argument nevertheless requires certain modifications. It is far from obvious that the parallels between Stoic and Thomasine ideas on the body and the world are "surprisingly close." And even if the hypothetical Stoic-minded readers of *Thomas* 56 and 80 had recognized the similarities between these sayings and the Stoic tradition, they also would also have had to detect the fundamental difference between Thomasine theology and Stoicism. Whereas *Thomas* proclaims that the world is a corpse and that it is inferior to individuals who possess the true understanding of its nature, Stoics believed that the world was a living being and that nothing was superior to it, a view that goes back to Zeno:

Again, Zeno says: "The rational is superior to the non-rational. But nothing is superior to the world. Therefore the world is rational (λογικός). And similarly with 'intelligent' and 'participating in animation.' For the intelligent is superior to the non-intelligent, and the animate to the non-animate. But nothing is superior to the world. Therefore the world is intelligent (νοερός) and animate (ἐμψυχός)" (Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 9.104 = *SVF* 1.111; trans. A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley).

This understanding of the world is attested throughout the history of Stoicism; Diogenes Laertius informs us that, according to several major Stoic teachers, "the world is a living being, rational, animate and intelligent (καὶ ζῶον ὁ κόσμος καὶ λογικὸν καὶ ἐμψυχον καὶ νοερόν)" (*Vit. philos.* 7.142 = *SVF* 2.633 = Posidonius, fr. 99a Edelstein-Kidd; trans. R. D. Hicks). Thus any Stoic-minded reader of *Thomas* 56 and 80 would most certainly see these sayings as alien to and incompatible with Stoicism. A Stoic reading of these sayings thus seems to be an exercise in vain, for, in order to interpret them from a Stoic perspective, one would need to ignore their main thrust, which is essentially anti-Stoic.<sup>101</sup>

Thus, Uro's Stoic reading of *Thomas* 56 and 80 is problematic. Is it possible, then, to adopt a different strategy and argue that the understanding of body and world in these sayings is in some way indebted to the Stoic tradition? This option is also unlikely. It seems that *Thomas* is unaware of any specifically Stoic ideas. In fact, whenever there is an ideological affinity between *Thomas* and Stoicism, a similar concept is also attested in contemporary Platonist tradition. Sayings 56 and 80 illustrate this rule. Included in these sayings are notions attested in both Platonist and Stoic sources (viz. that bodies are corpses and that the world is a body), but neither they nor any other Thomasine sayings betray any knowledge of the distinctively Stoic doctrine of the three classes of existing things. Were one to conjecture that sayings 56 and 80 presuppose the Stoic theory of three classes of existing things and the concept of τὰ ἀδιάφορα,<sup>102</sup> thus regarding the world as one of the "indifferents," he or she would need to read the concept of τὰ ἀδιάφορα into *Thomas*, for the text of *Thomas* itself does not corroborate such an interpretation. Moreover, while the notion that bodies are corpses was widely attested among the Middle Platonists roughly contemporary with *Thomas*, it was not especially popular among Stoics. The only two Stoic authors, in fact, who mention this notion are Epictetus (*Diss.* 1.19.9; 2.19.27; 3.10.15; 3.22.41) and Marcus Aurelius (*Medit.* 4.41; 9.24), and even then the

<sup>101</sup> In chapter 5 of this dissertation, I suggest that sayings 56 and 80 should be understood as polemical attacks against the Greco-Roman reverence for the world.

<sup>102</sup> See *SVF* 1.190 = *SVF* 3.70 = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 2.7.5a: τῶν δ' ὄντων τὰ μὲν ἀγαθὰ, τὰ δὲ κακὰ, τὰ δὲ ἀδιάφορα; see also *SVF* 1.191–6; *SVF* 3.71; 117.

latter author explicitly states that he borrows the notion from the former author. It is quite possible that Epictetus appropriated this notion from contemporary Platonists, which means that unless we postulate that *Thomas* depends on Epictetus, Stoic influence on *Thomas* is unlikely.

If the notions that bodies are corpses and that the world is a body in sayings 56 and 80 are not due to the Stoic influence, then where do they come from? In chapter 5, I demonstrate that whereas the latter notion was common knowledge in the ancient world, the former in all likelihood derives from Platonist tradition. First, this hypothesis does not compel us to impose upon the text of *Thomas* any concepts that are foreign to it. Second, the notion that the human body is a corpse seems to have emerged from Platonist circles and, as I have already pointed out, is widely attested among Middle Platonists. Finally, throughout this dissertation I will argue that various Thomasine sayings allude to and make use of certain Platonist motifs and concepts. It seems reasonable, therefore, to surmise that it was the Platonist tradition that bore sway over sayings 56 and 80.

In sum, the relationship of *Thomas* and Stoicism does not seem to be the most promising avenue of research. While it is impossible to prove that *Thomas* was not read by Stoic-minded individuals or that some Thomasine sayings could not have been interpreted from the Stoic perspective, it nevertheless seems that the text of *Thomas* neither presupposes nor invites such an interpretation; if anything, it actively resists Stoic reading. In other words, a Stoic reading of *Thomas* does not seem to have any particular advantage over an Epicurean reading of *Thomas* nor, for instance, that from the perspective of an Isis worshipper. Similarly, there seems to be no reason to think that sayings 56 and 80 presuppose certain Stoic concepts; in fact, there are several considerations against it. On the other hand, a Platonist background of these sayings is very likely.

This finally brings me to the discussion of the interactions between *Thomas* and Platonism. The first scholar to take these interactions seriously was Howard M. Jackson. In his doctoral dissertation, defended in 1983 and published as a monograph in 1985,<sup>103</sup> Jackson draws upon Plato's famous metaphor illustrating the three components of the human soul (*Resp.* 588b–592b) to illuminate *Thomas* 7, an obscure saying about a man and a lion. Although Jackson's train of thought was not impeccable (for instance, he was not aware of the fact that the lion saying is attested in Didymus the Blind, which gives enough ground to conclude that the Coptic text of *Thomas* 7 is an erroneous rendering of its Greek *Vorlage*), it certainly provided a fine example of the research on the affinities between *Thomas* and Platonism.<sup>104</sup>

Jackson's line of thinking has recently been taken up by Patterson, who, in his programmatic essay "Jesus Meets Plato: The Theology of the *Gospel of Thomas* and Middle Platonism,"<sup>105</sup> offers a survey of previous attempts to define the theological profile of *Thomas*. As Patterson points out, the efforts to understand *Thomas* as a "Gnostic" text were fruitless;<sup>106</sup> in fact, the very concept of "Gnosticism" has been rightly problematized in recent years.<sup>107</sup> Several proposals have been made to understand *Thomas* as an ascetic or mystical text. While it may be true to some degree that *Thomas* is ascetic and/or mystical, it is important to keep in mind that asceticism and mysticism "were

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<sup>103</sup> See Jackson 1985.

<sup>104</sup> For a detailed discussion of Jackson's interpretation of *Thomas* 7, see chapter 10.

<sup>105</sup> See Patterson 2013, 33–59; originally published as Patterson 2008.

<sup>106</sup> See, e.g., DeConick 1996, 3–27; Marjanen 1998a; Uro 2003, 31–53.

<sup>107</sup> See Williams 1996; King 2003; Williams 2005. It is worth noting that the term "Gnosticism" was coined in the seventeenth century by the Cambridge Platonist Henry More in the context of Protestant polemics against Roman Catholicism; see Layton 1995, 348–9. For a defense of "Gnosticism" as a heuristic category, see Marjanen 2008, 203–11.

ancillary to any number of theological orientations and ancient schools of thought.”<sup>108</sup> What previous scholarship, including Patterson himself, failed to notice was the fact that there are certain distinctively Platonist ideas in *Thomas* that allow us to locate this text confidently “in the Middle Platonic conversation, which found many diverse participants in the first two centuries of the common era.”<sup>109</sup>

In his relatively short article, Patterson manages to discuss the possible Platonist background of a wide range of Thomasine sayings. Quite naturally, my interpretation of a particular saying does not always agree with that of Patterson,<sup>110</sup> but his main conclusion, that *Thomas* “works with one of the dominant religious and philosophical schools of its day, Middle Platonism,”<sup>111</sup> is extremely compelling. This new perspective on *Thomas* seems to provide the academic community with a welcome opportunity to gain deeper insight into the elusive theology of this text.

It is worth noting that Patterson’s article is not itself a comprehensive study of the Platonizing tendencies in *Thomas*; rather, it is an invitation to explore a new and exciting avenue of research. I accept this invitation by developing Patterson’s hypothesis in the main part of my dissertation (chapters 5–11): chapters 5 and 6 deal with how *Thomas* and the Platonists discourse on the universe and human nature; chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10 discuss Thomasine and Platonist views on ultimate reality and human perfection; chapter 11 analyzes the Platonist influence on the Thomasine understanding of salvation history.

It is necessary, however, to touch upon a few more general, preliminary issues beforehand. First, it needs to be specified what exactly is to be understood as “Middle Platonism.” Second, since research on the Platonizing tendencies of *Thomas* is certainly not the first attempt to relate early Christian literature to Platonist philosophy, and indeed some important work has already been done, it will be important to place this dissertation project into a broader academic context.

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<sup>108</sup> Patterson 2013, 34–5.

<sup>109</sup> Patterson 2013, 37.

<sup>110</sup> In chapter 6, for example, I express doubts over Patterson’s suggestion that the Thomasine notion of “spirit” (πνεῦμα) is identical to the Platonist notion of “mind” (νοῦς).

<sup>111</sup> Patterson 2013, 59.



### 3. Middle Platonism: A Debated Concept

The focus of this dissertation is on the impact of Middle Platonism on *Thomas*. It is fitting, then, to provide the reader with a few introductory notes regarding the term “Middle Platonism” and the historical movement it designates. Moreover, since the term “Middle Platonism” is modern and sometimes considered problematic,<sup>112</sup> it seems reasonable to offer arguments that would prove the validity of the term.

First and foremost, it should be noted that only the “Middle” part of “Middle Platonism” is modern. The second part, “Platonism,” is hardly problematic. Admittedly, “einen Begriff wie *ὁ Πλατωνισμός* hat es in der Antike nicht gegeben,”<sup>113</sup> yet ancient sources call a significant number of people, including many of those whom we call Middle Platonists, “Platonic philosophers.” A Platonic philosopher is, as John Glucker puts it, “the follower of a philosophical ‘persuasion,’ *αἵρεσις*, whose originator is believed to be Plato.”<sup>114</sup> As far as can be determined, the first to be called a “Platonic philosopher” was Ofellius Laetus.<sup>115</sup> In 1981, Johannes Nollé published an honorary inscription from Ephesus (I.Eph. 3901), praising *Ὁφέλλιος Λαῖτος Πλατωνικός φιλόσ[οφος]* and claiming that he was no less than a *Plato redivivus*.<sup>116</sup> On the basis of the letter forms of the inscription Nollé securely dated the inscription to the first century CE.<sup>117</sup> A year later, G. W. Bowersock plausibly identified this Ofellius Laetus with the Laetus mentioned by Plutarch (see *Aet. phys.* 911f and 913e), placing him within the “international group of cultured men whom Plutarch knew in the reign of Domitian.”<sup>118</sup> Thus, the expression “Platonic philosopher” emerged towards the end of the first century CE. It gradually gained popularity and, in the middle of the second century, a number of Platonists are described by contemporary sources as “Platonic philosophers.”<sup>119</sup>

As for the term “Middle Platonism,” it was coined, according to Heinrich Dörrie,<sup>120</sup> less than one century ago by the German classicist Karl Praechter.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, it is not hard to understand why this term is modern: it would be very surprising to learn that some ancient philosopher considered himself to be “in between.” The following passage from John Dillon’s afterword to his seminal work on Middle Platonism is very much to the point and worth quoting in full:

Now it must be admitted that being a “middle” anything is a rather troublesome state. If one declares oneself, or is identified as, a “neo-X” (a neo-Thomist, say, or a neo-Kantian, a neo-Marxist, or a neo-Freudian), one knows more or less where one stands. One is basically remaining true to the basic insights of the revered figure in question, while reserving the right to reinterpret them in the light of more recent developments. But who ever claimed to be a

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<sup>112</sup> See, e.g., Zambon 2006, 561–2; Tarrant 2010, 66.

<sup>113</sup> Baltes 2005, 179.

<sup>114</sup> Glucker 1978, 206.

<sup>115</sup> See Runia 1988, 243.

<sup>116</sup> Nollé 1981, 197 and pl. 5a; see also Meriç et al. 1981, 401; cf. Pleket and Stroud 1984, 245 (#951).

<sup>117</sup> See Nollé 1981, 204–5.

<sup>118</sup> See Bowersock 1982, 276–8.

<sup>119</sup> See Glucker 1978, 134–9.

<sup>120</sup> See Dörrie 1987, 45.

<sup>121</sup> See Praechter 1919, 536: the title of §70 is “Der mittlere Platonismus.”

*middle-X*? No one can, I think, conceive of himself as such a creature. It is not, therefore, I think, to be expected that “Middle Platonists” should ever have seen themselves as such.<sup>122</sup>

While it is, of course, significant that the term we apply to these philosophers is modern, this does not *ipso facto* constitute a sufficient argument to abandon this term altogether. Inventing heuristic terms that would provide us with a better understanding of the subject matter is, in fact, part and parcel of academic research. The field of linguistics contains particularly illuminating examples: Middle Egyptian, Middle Persian, Middle Chinese, Middle English, just to name a few. It is very unlikely that Chaucer, for instance, was aware of the fact that he was writing in Middle English. But it does prohibit us from using such a term in our research.

Just as “Middle English” designates a chronological period in the history of the English language, so, too, does “Middle Platonism” designate a chronological period in the history of ancient Platonism.<sup>123</sup> This period starts with “the renaissance of dogmatic Platonism which undoubtedly took place in the first century BC”<sup>124</sup> and ends with the emergence of Neoplatonism in the third century CE. In what follows, I would like first to discuss the end of this period, then return to its beginning.

Since the previous passage attempts to define Middle Platonism by setting it against Neoplatonism, it seems obvious that the term “Middle Platonism” is valid if and only if the term “Neoplatonism” is valid. Is it possible that “Neoplatonism” itself is a dubious category?

Until quite recently “Neoplatonism” was considered to be a modern term. Helmut Meinhardt was able to trace the origins of the term to the German scholarship of the latter half of the eighteenth century, suggesting that it was coined by Anton Friedrich Büsching.<sup>125</sup> He also pointed out that, according to Büsching and subsequent historians of philosophy, these “Neoplatonists” were “Verfälscher Platons.”<sup>126</sup> As Leo Catana notes in a recent article, for Büsching and others the term Neoplatonism “came to denote a discontinuity in the Platonic tradition, a corruption of genuine ancient Platonism, and a low point in the history of philosophy.”<sup>127</sup> In the same article, Catana argues that these German scholars were heavily influenced by the historiographical model proposed in the 1740s by Johann Jacob Brucker. It was Brucker who “cemented a sharp historiographical divide between Middle Platonism (ca. 80 BCE to ca. 220 CE) and Neoplatonism (ca. 200 to ca. 550 CE), identifying eclecticism and sectarianism as distinctive features of the latter.”<sup>128</sup> Catana concludes that the divide between Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism should be abandoned “since it cannot be justified in the essentialistic manner proposed by Brucker.”<sup>129</sup>

While Catana’s article contains valuable insights, his conclusion seems to be somewhat hasty. Contrary to popular belief, the term “Neoplatonism” was not invented by eighteenth-century German scholars. As Jens Lemanski has pointed out,<sup>130</sup> the term is attested already in *The Court of the Gentiles* by Theophilus Gale published in the latter half of the seventeenth century.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, Gale’s

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<sup>122</sup> Dillon 1996, 423.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Bechtle 1999, 68: the terms “Middle Platonism” and “Neoplatonism” should be used “in a merely chronological sense” and “as an equivalent for the words *pre-* and *post-Plotinian*, with reference to philosophers.”

<sup>124</sup> Whittaker 1987, 81.

<sup>125</sup> See Büsching 1772–1774, 2:467: the title of §72 is “Neue Platoniker.”

<sup>126</sup> Meinhardt 1984, 755.

<sup>127</sup> Catana 2013, 187.

<sup>128</sup> Catana 2013, 167.

<sup>129</sup> Catana 2013, 196.

<sup>130</sup> See Lemanski 2011, 46–48.

<sup>131</sup> See Gale 1670, 247: the title of Chapter 4 of Book 3 is “Of the Academicks and New Platonicks of Alexandria.”

expression “New Platonicks” is merely a development of similar expressions attested in early modern works as early as the sixteenth century: “Platonici iuniores” and “Platonici recentiores.”<sup>132</sup> The latter expression, as Lemanski has demonstrated, derives from Augustine’s *Cons.* 1.23.35—where Augustine speaks of “philosophi eorum recentiores Platonici, qui iam christianis temporibus fuerunt”: “Damit ist zwar ein entscheidender Anhaltspunkt dafür geliefert, dass eine begriffsgeschichtliche Variante des Ausdrucks ‘Neuplatonismus’ von Augustinus aus dem Jahr 399/400 stammt.”<sup>133</sup>

“Neoplatonism” is, therefore, not strictly a modern term, but rather one that can be traced back to an expression used by an ancient author. Neither was it coined by Büsching, nor did it initially have a negative connotation. It is also worth noting that Catana seems to be exaggerating somewhat when he says that Brucker “cemented” the division between Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism: as Dörrie argued, “Vor 1900 sind nicht selten solche Platoniker, die sich in zeitlichem Abstand von Platon befinden, als Neuplatoniker bezeichnet worden.”<sup>134</sup> Thus Büsching, as Lemanski points out,<sup>135</sup> lists among his “Neue Platoniker” Theon of Smyrna, Alcinous, Apuleius, and Numenius, i.e. all the philosophers that are nowadays classified as Middle Platonists. It was only in 1864 that Heinrich von Stein made a proposal to confine the use of the term “Neoplatonism” to the historical phase of Platonism that started with Ammonius Saccas and Plotinus.<sup>136</sup> Quite remarkably, in order to justify his proposal, von Stein referred not to the preceding German scholarship, but to Augustine.

What is perhaps even more important for the present discussion is that if we turn to the Neoplatonist sources we realize that Neoplatonists themselves clearly distinguished themselves from the preceding Platonists whom we now conventionally label as “Middle Platonists.”<sup>137</sup> On this self-designation, two fifth-century authors, Hierocles of Alexandria and Proclus, seem to provide us with sufficient evidence. The former argued that true Platonism was rediscovered by Ammonius Saccas, the latter, by Plotinus, Ammonius’ student.

As Hermann S. Schibli puts it, Hierocles undoubtedly “saw in Ammonius an axial figure in the history of philosophy.”<sup>138</sup> Hierocles was convinced that Plato’s philosophy was in agreement with that of Aristotle. According to him, before Ammonius, whom he calls “the one who was taught by God” (Αμμώνιος ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς ὁ θεοδιδάκτος), many Platonists and Aristotelians (πολλοὶ τῶν ἀπὸ Πλάτωνος καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ Ἀριστοτέλους) denied the unanimity of Plato and Aristotle. Moreover, “their contentiousness and daring have driven them to the point of falsifying the writings of their teachers in order better to show that these philosophers fought against each other” (Photius, *Bibl.* 251.461a.24–31 Bekker; trans. H. S. Schibli).

When Ammonius’ wisdom “shone forth” (διέλαμψεν), the decline of Platonism was brought to an end. It was Ammonius who “purified the opinions of the ancient philosophers, removed the useless elements that clung to them both, and proved that the mind of Plato and Aristotle was in harmony regarding the important and most necessary doctrines” (Photius, *Bibl.* 214.172a.2–9 Bekker; trans. H. S. Schibli). Hierocles called Ammonius’ school (ἡ διατριβή) “the sacred race,” ἡ ἱερὰ γενεά,<sup>139</sup> and

<sup>132</sup> See Lemanski 2011, 49–50.

<sup>133</sup> Lemanski 2011, 51. Note that Lemanski’s reference “23.55” should be corrected to “23.35.”

<sup>134</sup> Dörrie 1987, 44.

<sup>135</sup> See Lemanski 2011, 36.

<sup>136</sup> See von Stein 1864, 316.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. Baltes 2000, 294.

<sup>138</sup> Schibli 2002, 30.

<sup>139</sup> This expression is also attested in Damascius, *Vit. Isid.* fr. 73a Athanassiadi (= Photius, *Bibl.*, 242.342b.31–4 Bekker). According to Athanassiadi 1999, 189, ἡ ἱερὰ γενεά “must be an ‘insider’s’ term for the Neoplatonists.”

claimed that all the members of this school (Plotinus, Origen, Porphyry, Iamblichus, and others) were in accord with “the philosophy of Plato in its purified form” (ἡ Πλάτωνος διακεκαθαυμένη φιλοσοφία) (214.173a.32–40 Bekker; trans. H. S. Schibli).

A similar concept of the history of Platonism was professed by Proclus. As Glucker puts it, the preface of Proclus’ *Theologia Platonica* “provides us with Proclus’ own version of the story of the long ‘underground existence’ of genuine Platonism and its rebirth and rediscovery at the school of Plotinus.”<sup>140</sup> According to Proclus, Plato’s philosophy was firmly established in the innermost sanctuaries (τῶν ἀδύτων ἐντὸς ἰδρυνηθεῖσα ἀσφαλῶς) and remained unknown to many of those who entered them (τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν εἰσιόντων ἀγνοηθεῖσα). Yet, in ordained periods of time (ἐν τακταῖς χρόνων περιόδοις), it was revealed by certain true priests (τινὲς ἱερεῖς ἀληθινοί). Proclus claims that these “interpreters of Platonic revelation who unfolded to us the most sacred explanations of the divine matters and obtained the nature that was nearly equal to their teacher (οἱ τῆς Πλατωνικῆς ἐποπτείας ἐξηγηταὶ καὶ τὰς παναγεστάτας ἡμῖν περὶ τῶν θείων ὑφηγήσεις ἀναπλώσαντες καὶ τῷ σφετέρῳ καθηγεμόνι παραπλησίαν τὴν φύσιν λαχόντες)” are Plotinus, his students (Amelius and Porphyry), the students of those students (Iamblichus and Theodorus of Asine), and those who followed “this divine chorus” (ὁ θεῖος οὗτος χορός) (*Theologia Platonica* 1.6.7–7.8 Saffrey and Westerink).

The idea that it was Plotinus and his students who rediscovered Plato’s philosophy is also presupposed in Proclus’ *In Platonis Timaeum commentaria*.<sup>141</sup> Here, Proclus repeatedly distinguishes two kinds of “interpreters of Plato” (οἱ τοῦ Πλάτωνος ἐξηγηταί) (3.234.9 Diehl). The first group is called “the more ancient interpreters,” οἱ παλαιότεροι τῶν ἐξηγητῶν (1.218.2–3; 3.234.15 Diehl) or οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, sc. ἐξηγηταί (2.212.14 Diehl). This group consists of those interpreters whom Proclus, in quite a belittling manner, calls “Attici, Albini, and others of such sort” (τοὺς Ἀττικοὺς λέγω καὶ Ἀλβίνους καὶ τοιοῦτους τινάς), contrasting them with “the ones who are more moderate (μετριώτεροι) and mild (πραότεροι) than them” (3.234.17–9 Diehl). The latter interpreters are the ones “who approach the words of Plato in a more philosophical manner (φιλοσοφώτερον)” (2.154.1–2 Diehl; trans. D. Baltzly). This second group is called “the more recent interpreters,” οἱ δεύτεροι, sc. ἐξηγηταί (2.212.13 Diehl), or νεώτεροι, sc. ἐξηγηταί (3.245.19–20 Diehl). Unsurprisingly, the “more recent” group comprises Plotinus and the other “true priests” described in the preface of *Theologia Platonica* (see, e.g., *Comm. Tim.* 1.218.8–14 Diehl, where the opinions of the unnamed “more ancient interpreters”<sup>142</sup> are contrasted with those of “divine Iamblichus” and “our teacher,” i.e. Syrianus).

In sum, it seems that there are sufficient reasons not to abandon the divide between Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. It is fairly clear that the philosophers whom the scholarship of the modern era labeled as “Neoplatonists” saw themselves as “the sacred race” (Hierocles) and “the divine chorus” (Proclus), which was different from and superior to those philosophers who are now conventionally termed “Middle Platonists.” Moreover, the term “Neoplatonism,” although it was not employed as a self-designation, does not appear to be problematic. This term, as Lemanski has shown, goes back to Augustine’s expression “recentiores Platonici,” and it seems likely that the Neoplatonists

<sup>140</sup> Glucker 1978, 312.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. Baltes 2005, 197–8.

<sup>142</sup> According to Baltes 1976–1978, 1:99–100, Proclus refers to Albinus.

themselves would hardly have found this appellation objectionable, since, according to Proclus, it was “the more recent interpreters” of Plato who revived Platonism after a long period of decay.

Having discussed the delimitations of Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism, I move on to the main trait that distinguishes both Middle Platonists and Neoplatonists from their predecessors, viz. their dogmatism. As Julia Annas puts it, “From about 273 BC, when Arcesilaus of Pitane took over its headship, until it petered out in the first century BC, Plato’s school, the Academy, practised and taught a form of scepticism.”<sup>143</sup> It was in the first century BCE that, while academic skepticism was “petering out,” the dogmatic approach to Plato’s heritage gained currency.

It is worth noting that both of the terms used in modern times to distinguish “dogmatism” from “skepticism” were employed by the ancients themselves. The difference between skepticism and dogmatism is conveniently spelled out by Diogenes Laertius in an introductory section of his biography of Greek philosophers: “Philosophers may be divided into dogmatists (οἱ δογματικοί) and sceptics (οἱ ἐφεκτικοί): all those who make assertions about things assuming that they can be known are dogmatists; while all who suspend their judgement on the ground that things are unknowable are sceptics” (*Vit. philos.* 1.16; trans. R. D. Hicks).

Our main source for the ancient skeptic tradition, Sextus Empiricus, offers another definition of “dogmatism.” According to him, the dogmatists are those who claim that they have discovered the truth (*Pyr.* 1.2–3). Sceptics, on the other hand, do not make such a claim, nor do they subscribe to any dogmas. Sextus uses the word “dogma” (δόγμα) to designate philosophical and scientific theories and defines it as “assent to something unclear” (πράγματι ἀδήλῳ συγκατάθεσις) (1.16; trans. J. Annas and J. Barnes) or, more precisely, “assent to some unclear object of investigation in the sciences” (ἢ τινι πράγματι τῶν κατὰ τὰς ἐπιστήμας ζητουμένων ἀδήλων συγκατάθεσις) (1.13; trans. J. Annas and J. Barnes).<sup>144</sup>

It is worth noting that the dogmatic philosophers also employed the word “dogma,” though, unlike the sceptics, they did not seem to provide us with their definition of the term. Nonetheless, the contexts in which the term is used allow us to understand its meaning. In his thorough study of “the sense and the colour of the word δόγμα,”<sup>145</sup> Jonathan Barnes points out that “the first author we know to have made frequent use of δόγμα” is Philo of Alexandria and that Philo’s usage of the term is “typical.” In his writings δόγματα “are almost invariably philosophical tenets or religious beliefs—the δόγμα that the soul is immortal, the δόγμα that the world was created by God, the δόγματα of Moses.” In sum, Philo’s δόγματα are “weighty, substantial beliefs—tenets, doctrines, principles.”<sup>146</sup>

As Whittaker points out, a prominent feature of Middle Platonism is the assumption that “the writings of Plato contain along with much else a certain number of Platonic δόγματα which can be removed from their contexts and forged together into a systematic whole.”<sup>147</sup> The supposition that Plato’s dialogues contain dogmas and that these dogmas can be discerned probably made its way even into the ancient copies of the philosopher’s works. According to Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 3.65–6, the manuscripts of Plato’s dialogues were annotated with a wide array of marginal markers. One of those markers, the diplē, was employed to isolate Plato’s δόγματα. PSI 1488, a papyrus

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<sup>143</sup> Annas 1992, 43.

<sup>144</sup> For a discussion of this definition, see, e.g., Frede 1997, 18–9; Burnyeat 1997a, 50–1; Burnyeat 1997b, 114–5.

<sup>145</sup> See Barnes 1990, 2627–31.

<sup>146</sup> Barnes 1990, 2628.

<sup>147</sup> Whittaker 1987, 109.

fragment from the collection of the University of Florence, contains a text with similar such marginal markers in Plato's works. It is very likely that PSI 1488 is a witness to the text of the source employed by Diogenes in *Vit. philos.* 3.65–6.<sup>148</sup> While the relevant part of the papyrus (PSI 1488.1–3) is partially lost, it can be securely restored on the basis of the parallel text in Diogenes: [ἡ δὲ διπλῆ > πρὸς τὰ δόγματ]α λαμβάνε[ται καὶ τὰ ἀρέσκοντα Πλ]άτωνι, “[the diplē >] indicates [the dogmas and opinions] of Plato.” PSI 1488 was dated by its editor, Vittorio Bartoletti, to the middle of the second century CE,<sup>149</sup> placing Diogenes' source well into the Middle Platonist timeframe.

Notably, the question of whether or not Plato held dogmas was a matter of debate in the ancient world. As Diogenes Laertius reports, “there is great division of opinion between those who affirm and those who deny that Plato was a dogmatist (οἱ μὲν φασιν αὐτὸν δογματίζειν, οἱ δ' οὐ)” (*Vit. philos.* 3.51; trans. R. D. Hicks). Similarly, the anonymous author of the Middle Platonist Commentarius in Platonis Theaetetus says that some people think that “Plato was an Academic in so far as he did not hold any dogmas (Ἀκαδημαϊκὸς ὁ Πλάτων ὡς οὐδὲν δογματίζων)” (54.40–3 Bastianini and Sedley). As for the author of the commentary himself, he does not have any doubts about Plato's dogmatism: τὸν Πλάτωνα ἔχειν δόγματα καὶ ἀπ[ο]φαίνεσθαι πεποιθότως πάρ[εστιν] ἐξ α[ὐ]τοῦ λα[μβάν]ει[ν], “that Plato held dogmas and confidently declared them can be determined from Plato himself” (55.8–13 Bastianini and Sedley).

Similarly, both authors of the only two extant introductions to Middle Platonist philosophy, Alcinous and Apuleius, describe their handbooks as systematic accounts of Plato's dogmas. In the opening passage of his work, Alcinous describes his work as τῶν κυριωτάτων Πλάτωνος δογμάτων διδασκαλία, “an introduction to Plato's principal dogmas” (*Didasc.* 1.1). In the same fashion, Apuleius, after giving a brief account of Plato's life, says, “Quae autem consulta, quae δόγματα graece licet dici, ad utilitatem hominum vivendique et intellegendi ac loquendi rationem extulerit, hinc ordiemur,” “And now we will relate the decrees that may be called δόγματα in Greek and that he (i.e. Plato) set for the benefit of humanity as the manner of living, thinking, and speaking” (*Plat. Dogm.* 189).

Thus, to recapitulate, dogmatism is the most fundamental trait that distinguishes Middle Platonism from its predecessor, academic skepticism. The point of departure for the reemerging dogmatic Platonism was the conviction that Plato himself was a dogmatist, that his δόγματα were laid down in his dialogues, that these dogmas could be identified; excerpted; and fused together into a coherent philosophical system, and that this system would constitute the ultimate truth.

The validity of Middle Platonism as a term aside, there are some peculiar features of Middle Platonism worth noting. Certainly, it is insufficient to say that Middle Platonists were dogmatists. After all, the same applies to the majority of their contemporaries. Sextus Empiricus, for instance, gives the following list of dogmatic philosophers: “Aristotelians, Epicureans, Stoics, and others (οἱ περὶ Ἀριστοτέλην καὶ Ἐπικούρου καὶ τοὺς Στωϊκοὺς καὶ ἄλλοι τινές)” (*Pyr.* 1.3).

Whereas there can be little doubt that Middle Platonists occasionally appropriated certain concepts and terminologies of their competitors, especially those of the Aristotelians and the Stoics,<sup>150</sup> Middle Platonist sources reveal to us the breadth of their distinctive and recurring δόγματα. These

<sup>148</sup> See Dörrie and Baltes 1990, 348; cf. Mejer 1992, 3572.

<sup>149</sup> See Bartoletti 1964, 25.

<sup>150</sup> See, e.g., Whittaker 1987, 110–7.

“dominant themes” of Middle Platonism, e.g. the definition of τέλος as ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, “becoming as like God as possible” (Plato, *Theaet.* 176b; trans. M. J. Levett and M. Burnyeat), are conveniently summarized by Dillon,<sup>151</sup> particular instances of dogmas with a direct bearing on the interpretation of *Thomas* will be thoroughly discussed in the following chapters.

What should be said at the outset is that regardless of a given Middle Platonist’s personal preferences and idiosyncrasies, there was always a strong commitment to “a transcendent supreme principle, and a non-material, intelligible world above and beyond this one, which stands as a paradigm for it.”<sup>152</sup> The premise that there are prior metaphysical causes for our physical universe is what distinguishes Middle Platonists from any other dogmatic αἵρεσις, be that the Aristotelianism, Stoicism, or Epicureanism.<sup>153</sup>

It is worth noting that the distinction between the sensible and intelligible realms was perceived as the salient feature of Platonism already in the ancient world. This point is illustrated in *Vitarum auctio*, a satirical work by Lucian of Samosata. In this dialogue, Zeus puts to bid ten philosophers, each of whom represents a respective philosophical school. The following passage offers an ironic exposition of Plato’s teaching, personified by Socrates. When asked to summarize the salient features of his teaching, Socrates replies, “The forms and the models of existing things; for of everything you see, the earth, the things on the earth, the sky, the sea, there are invisible images outside the universe” (*Vit. auct.* 18).<sup>154</sup>

The last subject that should be touched upon in this introductory chapter is the matter of principal sources for the Middle Platonist doctrines. Unfortunately, as it is often the case with ancient history, our evidence is rather limited. For some figures, little more than a name has survived.<sup>155</sup> Sometimes we are luckier and a later author provides us with the title of a Middle Platonist’s work and a few fragments thereof. In other cases, there is a considerable number of texts preserved by direct transmission, e.g. the works of Plutarch and the handbooks of Alcinous and Apuleius.

It does not seem to be necessary to go through every prominent Middle Platonist and each datum of evidence that allows us to reconstruct his or her ideas; this information can be obtained from the only systematic treatment of the subject that has so far been written, Dillon’s book *The Middle Platonists*. There is, however, at least one more figure that deserves special attention: Philo. While some scholars identify him as a Middle Platonist, others resist this label. The most thorough discussion of this issue has been done by David T. Runia.<sup>156</sup> In his article, Runia delineates a wide

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<sup>151</sup> See Dillon 1996, 43–51; cf. Zambon 2006, 569–71.

<sup>152</sup> Dillon 1996, 51.

<sup>153</sup> In a paper presented at the conference “From Stoicism to Platonism? On a Possibly Asymmetrical Relationship of the Two Philosophical Schools in the Period 100 BCE–100 CE” (Copenhagen, August 22, 2014), George Boys-Stones suggested that the struggle between Platonism and all other dogmatic philosophical movements is to be understood as that between idealism and empiricism.

<sup>154</sup> Following the Middle Platonists, Lucian employs the term εἰκών, “image,” as a synonym for παράδειγμα, “model.” I come back to the meaning of “image” in Middle Platonism in general and to this passage in particular in chapter 11.

<sup>155</sup> Such is the case, e.g., with Ofellius Laetus (see above) as well as Arria the Platonist (Ἀρρία Πλατωνική), who is mentioned in a Roman inscription (see Rigsby 2001). This Arria must be identical with Galen’s “dearest Arria,” who was greatly praised by the emperors “for perfect philosophy and for taking a special delight in Plato’s words (διὰ τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν ἀκριβῶς, καὶ τοῖς Πλάτωνος μάλιστα χαίρειν λόγοις)” (Galen, *Ther.* 217.16–8 Kühn). Arria appears to be the only woman who was undoubtedly a Middle Platonist; unfortunately, no account of her philosophy has survived. According to George Boys-Stones (private communication), two other women who were possibly Middle Platonists are Clea, the addressee of Plutarch’s *Mulierum virtutes* and *De Iside et Osiride*, and the anonymous dedicatee of Diogenes Laertius’ account of Plato (see *Vit. philos.* 3.47).

<sup>156</sup> See Runia 1993, 124–39.

spectrum of positions on Philo's relation to philosophy and points out that only the following three are plausible:

1. "that Philo is a *de facto* Middle Platonist, i.e. does not belong to the school, but has a philosophical stance which is fundamentally Platonist and might well make him welcome in such circles";
2. "that Philo is a Platonizing expositor of scripture, showing a marked preference for using Middle Platonist doctrines in his exegesis";
3. "that Philo is an eclectic philosophical expositor of scripture, who appropriates various school doctrines as it suits his exegetical purposes."<sup>157</sup>

Runia's own view coincides with the second position in this list: Philo was not a Middle Platonist, but rather a "Platonizing exegete of scripture." As an exegete of the Pentateuch and a devotee of Mosaic wisdom, Philo "is doing his own thing, and only secondarily concerned with philosophy."<sup>158</sup> It is nevertheless important to bear in mind that it is Platonism that provides Philo with "fundamental convictions in his philosophical views."<sup>159</sup> As Gregory E. Sterling wittily puts it, Philo saw himself as a devoted follower of Moses, but his Moses "was not a Hebrew Moses; he was a Middle Platonist."<sup>160</sup> Similarly, Dillon, while admitting that Philo is not a Platonist, claims that "his basic orientation is Platonist" and even regards him as "our best evidence for Middle Platonism at the earliest stage of its development."<sup>161</sup> To sum up, while it is clear that Philo adapted contemporary Platonist tradition for his own purposes and that Philonic evidence must be used with caution, the study of Middle Platonist δόγματα does not have the luxury to disregard this evidence. In the following chapters, I will often refer to Philo, but his evidence will be supplemented with the testimonies of "proper" Platonists.<sup>162</sup>

This chapter was not intended to serve as a comprehensive introduction to Plato and Platonism. My sole goal was instead to present my position on the questions that have direct bearing on the investigation of the Middle Platonist elements in *Thomas*. Thus, I pointed out that, while the term "Middle Platonist" for obvious reasons was never used as a self-designation, there are compelling reasons not to dismiss it. I sided with the scholars who contend that Middle Platonism should be understood as a chronological period in the history of ancient Platonist tradition that was brought about by the revival of the dogmatic approach to Plato's heritage. I also suggested that the main feature that distinguished Middle Platonists from their philosophical rivals was their conviction that there is an intelligible realm beyond the sensible one. Finally, I brought up the matter of Middle Platonist sources and pointed out that, notwithstanding the fact that he identified himself as an

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<sup>157</sup> Runia 1993, 125.

<sup>158</sup> Runia 1995, 189.

<sup>159</sup> Runia 1993, 130.

<sup>160</sup> Sterling 1993, 111.

<sup>161</sup> Dillon 1993b, 151; cf. Dillon 1996, 439.

<sup>162</sup> Another ancient writer who must be mentioned in connection with Philo is Galen. Galen explicitly refuses to declare allegiance to any philosophical αἵρεσις (*Aff. dign.* 8.8 = 5.43 Kühn), and thus can hardly be reckoned among the "proper" Platonists. Yet it seems clear that Galen often finds himself in fundamental agreement with Middle Platonist doctrines and thus at the very least can be described as "an author with Platonist sympathies" (Barnes 2015, 240). Just like Philo, Galen provides us with evidence that cannot be ignored in the study of the Platonist ideas contemporary with early Christianity.



adherent of the *αἵρεσις* of Moses rather than that of Plato and additionally prioritized scriptural exegesis over philosophy, Philo remains one of the most important sources for the Middle Platonist tradition.

#### 4. Recent Research on Early Christian Appropriation of Platonism

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of Platonist metaphysics for the development of Christian thought. The reasons why Christians turned their attention to Platonism are not difficult to fathom. “Since Plato there has been no theology which has not stood in his shadow. For many centuries Platonism was simply the way in which god was thought of and spoken about, in the West as in the Islamic East.”<sup>163</sup> It is, of course, no secret that Christian dogmatic theology adopted a generous number of its concepts from Platonist philosophy; by the time of the Cappadocian fathers, it was customary to talk about divine matters in Platonist terms.

It is, however, much more difficult to track the Platonist influence during the formative centuries of Christianity. Although the term “Christian Platonism” is usually applied to the two Alexandrians, Clement and Origen,<sup>164</sup> it is clear that Clement was not the first Christian intellectual who was familiar with and appropriated certain ideas from the Platonist tradition. As Henry Chadwick put it, “The way had been mapped out in advance by the second-century apologists, above all by Justin Martyr, who is certainly the greatest of them besides being the most voluminous.”<sup>165</sup> Justin himself tells us that before his turn to Christianity he “took delight in the teachings of Plato” (2 *Apol.* 12.1; trans. D. Minns and P. Parvis; cf. *Dial.* 2.6). Furthermore, as Runar M. Thorsteinsson has convincingly demonstrated, “in essence Justin remained a Platonist after his turn to Christianity,”<sup>166</sup> so that Middle Platonism continued to serve as “his primary philosophical-theological frame of reference.”<sup>167</sup>

It is worth noting, however, that apart from those early Christian thinkers for whom Platonism constituted their main “philosophical-theological frame of reference,” there are various early Christian texts that exhibit Platonizing tendencies. These texts would not qualify as “Platonist,” for Platonist ideas are just one of many diverse elements that constitute the fabric of these texts, yet if we appreciate the fact that these texts occasionally draw on Platonist ideas, images, and terms, we might gain better insight thereto.

In the last decades, the academic community has gradually come to realize that research into the Platonizing tendencies of early Christian texts may shed new light both on their meaning and their historical context. This increasing scholarly attention paid to the interaction between early Christianity and Platonism provides the research context for the present study on the impact of Platonist tradition on *Thomas*. It seems reasonable, therefore, to offer a short survey of the work that has been done along this avenue.

I have chosen studies that focus on two texts in particular: the monologue on sin, death, and the law in Rom 7:7–25 and the Prologue of John. I must point out that interpretations of Rom 7 and the Johannine Prologue are matters of heated scholarly debate; while I am personally convinced by the arguments for the Platonist influence of these texts, I admit that some of the New Testament scholars might entertain suspicions regarding these hypotheses. It must be emphasized that the observations on Rom and John presented below have no direct bearing on my conclusions regarding the

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<sup>163</sup> Burkert 1985, 321.

<sup>164</sup> See, e.g., Dillon 1996, 396 and 420–1.

<sup>165</sup> Chadwick 1966, 9; cf. Chadwick 1970, 160: “The first serious beginnings of Christian philosophy appear in Justin Martyr in the middle years of the second century.”

<sup>166</sup> Thorsteinsson 2012, 509.

<sup>167</sup> Thorsteinsson 2012, 516.

interactions between *Thomas* and Platonism. My sole intention is to map out the research situation and to point out where in the scholarly tradition I place my current project.

#### 4.1. Rom 7:7–25

In her doctoral dissertation completed in 2005 and published as a monograph in 2008, Emma Wasserman made a convincing case that “Rom 7 can be better understood by appreciating its appropriation of Platonic language and assumptions.”<sup>168</sup> The arguments Wasserman offers in her monograph are numerous and complex; in what follows, I will be able to discuss only the most important of them.

In her work, Wasserman relies upon the insights expressed by Stanley K. Stowers. In his seminal commentary on Paul’s letter to the Romans, Stowers demonstrated that the monologue in Rom 7 is an adaptation of the Hellenistic moral discourse. He took as a point of departure verses 7:15 and 7:19, the two of which reveal the core message of the whole chapter. According to Stowers, these verses contain “a ubiquitous Greek saying that is central to the Greco-Roman ethic of self-mastery”.<sup>169</sup>

For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate (οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω τοῦτο πράσσω, ἀλλ’ ὃ μισῶ τοῦτο ποιῶ) (Rom 7:15; NRSV).

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do (οὐ γὰρ ὃ θέλω ποιῶ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ ὃ οὐ θέλω κακὸν τοῦτο πράσσω) (Rom 7:19; NRSV).

In these two verses, the speaker of the monologue admits that he is unable to exercise control over his own actions. The dilemma expressed here is pronouncedly Greek; it is exemplified by the figure of Medea who, before murdering her children, utters, “I know that what I am about to do is evil, but anger is stronger than my deliberations” (καὶ μανθάνω μὲν οἶα δρᾶν μέλλω κακά, θυμὸς δὲ κρείσσει τῶν ἐμῶν βουλευμάτων) (Euripides, *Med.* 1078–9). Medea’s words became the classic expression of the gap between knowing the good and doing it and thus, as Stowers points out, “played a central role in the Greek moral tradition.”<sup>170</sup>

Since the words of Medea and those of the speaker of Rom 7:15 and 7:19 are mere variants of the same maxim, it comes as no surprise that, as Stowers puts it, “Most aspects of Paul’s discussion in 7:7–25 can be paralleled with language from this tradition.”<sup>171</sup> What is even more important for the present discussion is that Stowers goes beyond this claim and does not merely say that, in Rom 7, Paul uses Greek philosophy, but argues that, “in crucial respects,” he sides with the Platonists against the Stoics.<sup>172</sup> In other words, whereas the problem Paul discusses in Rom 7 is common to all the philosophical school of the Greco-Roman world, the solution he offers is specifically Platonist.

It is this claim that found most detailed support in Wasserman’s monograph. As she points out, both Stoics and the Platonists used their respective theories of mind to interpret Medea’s deliberation.

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<sup>168</sup> Wasserman 2008, 5.

<sup>169</sup> Stowers 1994, 260.

<sup>170</sup> Stowers 1994, 263.

<sup>171</sup> Stowers 1994, 264.

<sup>172</sup> Stowers 1994, 279.

According to Galen's Platonist interpretation, Medea's words exemplify "the battle between reason and the emotions of the spirited part of the tripartite soul, and Medea commits infanticide when reason finally loses this struggle."<sup>173</sup> As Galen puts it, Medea "was not persuaded by any reasoning (λογισμός) to kill her children; quite the contrary, so far as reasoning goes, she says that she understands how evil the acts are that she is about to perform, but her anger is stronger than her deliberations; that is, her affection (τὸ πάθος) has not been made to submit and does not obey and follow reason (ὁ λόγος) as it would a master, but throws off the reins and departs and disobeys the command, the implication being that it is the action or affection of some power other than the rational (ὡς ἐτέρας τινὸς ἔργον ἢ πάθημα δυνάμειος ὑπάρχον, οὐ τῆς λογιστικῆς)" (Galen, *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 4.2.27 = 5.372 Kühn = 343 Müller; trans. P. de Lacy).<sup>174</sup>

The Stoics, on the other hand, rejected the Platonist notion of the divided self and argued that Medea acted rationally: she committed infanticide because at the moment she was convinced that vengeance took priority over the lives of her children. Thus, when an imaginary interlocutor refers to Medea's words and asks how it is possible that she knew what was profitable for her, yet did the opposite, Epictetus answers: "It is because she regards the very gratification of her anger and the taking of vengeance on her husband as more profitable (συμφορώτερον) than the saving of her children" (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.28.7).<sup>175</sup> As Robert F. Dobbin puts it, "her crimes were acts of passion, but her passion grew out of a conscious decision to gratify her outraged sense of justice."<sup>176</sup>

Between these two competing theories, Paul most certainly gravitates towards the Platonist one. In her critique of Troels Engberg-Pedersen's Stoic reading of Rom 7,<sup>177</sup> Wasserman argues that this monistic theory of mind finds no support in Paul's text:

Though formally the Stoics deny that self-division or contradiction is even possible, they argue that bad acts occur when the mind commits itself to false propositions. In contrast, the mind in Rom 7 is not corrupted by false information and it does not waver between competing claims about what is good and bad. The speaker never equivocates about right and wrong and never approves of what sin does but rather constantly affirms its capacity for knowledge and good judgment.<sup>178</sup>

On the other hand, Rom 7 "consistently uses images and terms that fit with Platonic representations of inner conflict."<sup>179</sup> First of all, in Rom 7, Paul employs the Platonist terms for the rational part of the soul, ὁ νοῦς ("mind") and ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος ("the inner person"), the latter being a variation of "the inner person" (ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος) from Plato's allegory of the soul (*Resp.* 589b). Paul's use of this terminology enables Wasserman to understand the speaker of the monologue as the

<sup>173</sup> Wasserman 2008, 28.

<sup>174</sup> See also Galen, *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 3.3.13–22 = 5.306–8 Kühn = 272–4 Müller and 4.6.19–22 = 5.408–9 Kühn = 382–3 Müller.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.17.19–22.

<sup>176</sup> Dobbin 1998, 222.

<sup>177</sup> See Engberg-Pedersen 2000, 240–6.

<sup>178</sup> Wasserman 2008, 95.

<sup>179</sup> Wasserman 2007, 797.

rational part of the soul<sup>180</sup> and to suggest that “Rom 7:7–25 depicts the plight of reason or mind imprisoned by the passions and appetites.”<sup>181</sup>

More important than just the common terminology, Rom 7 shares with Platonist tradition several features of what Wasserman terms the discourse of extreme immorality. First of all, “sin in Rom 7:7–25 makes sense in light of similar uses of figures such as a monstrous ruling passion, a jailor, and vice to represent the irrational parts of the soul.”<sup>182</sup> Plato says that the triumph of the passions over reason makes reason a slave unable to do what he wants (*Resp.* 577d–e). Similarly, Galen compares this situation to that of a lover who wishes he could stop, but cannot (*Aff. dign.* 6.8–9 = 5.29 Kühn), and Philo likewise describes reason’s defeat as the imprisonment of the mind (*Deus* 111–3) and the death of the soul (*Leg.* 1.105–7). In this same manner, the speaker of Rom 7 accuses sin of deceiving (7:11) and enslaving (7:14) him, and of making him captive (7:23) and killing him (7:13), so that, as a result, the speaker, though he knows the good, cannot put this knowledge into action (7:15 and 7:19–20).<sup>183</sup>

Second, “Rom 7 manifests a rational or reasoning part of the person consistent with a middle-Platonic discourse alive in Paul’s day.”<sup>184</sup> The “I” of Rom 7:7–25 never speaks approvingly of sin and never sanctions what sin does. Unlike the Medea of Epictetus, it never finds sinful acts to be “more profitable” than obeying God’s law. Quite the contrary, just like the rational part of the soul in the Platonist discourse of extreme immorality, the “I” of this monologue perfectly understands right from wrong, condemns everything sin does, yet is still unable to interfere. As Wasserman notes, the speaker complains incessantly about this inner conflict:

Rom 7:15 claims, “I do not know what I am doing” and in fact “I do that which I do not want to do, that which I hate”; in 7:16 the law is good—“if I do the thing which I do not want”; in 7:17, “I now understand that it is not me doing this [thing I hate], but the sin which dwells in me”; in 7:18, “I can wish to do the good but not do it”; in 7:19, “for I do not do the good that I want, but I do the evil that I do not want”; in 7:20, “if I do the thing that I do not want, it is no longer I that does it, but the sin that lives in me”; and finally in 7:21, “I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close by me.”<sup>185</sup>

Finally, “the role of body and flesh in Rom 7 makes sense in light of the Platonic premise that the body is naturally allied with passions and appetites.”<sup>186</sup> Indeed, just as Paul in Rom 7 repeatedly claims that body and flesh co-conspire with sin, so also does the Platonist tradition argue that due to the fact that there is an intimate connection between the body and the passions, the body is intrinsically bad. Thus, according to Philo, the soul dies when it is overcome by the body and entombed in the passions and wickedness (*ἐντυμβευομένη πάθεισι καὶ κακλαῖς ἀπάσαις*) (*Leg.* 1.106). Goodness and virtue are life, evil and wickedness (*τὸ κακὸν καὶ ἡ κακία*) death, and deathless life “to

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<sup>180</sup> See Wasserman 2008, 89.

<sup>181</sup> Wasserman 2008, 8.

<sup>182</sup> Wasserman 2007, 810.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Wasserman 2013, 270.

<sup>184</sup> Wasserman 2008, 115.

<sup>185</sup> Wasserman 2008, 108.

<sup>186</sup> Wasserman 2008, 96; cf. Stowers 2003, 538.

be possessed by a love of God and a friendship for God with which flesh and body have no concern” (*Fug.* 58; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

In her monograph, Wasserman thus offered a pioneering study of Paul’s appropriation of Platonist moral psychology. As Stowers puts it, she made “a decisive case” that, in Rom 7, Paul makes use of the Platonist notion of the divided self.<sup>187</sup> Although her research does not offer a thorough analysis of the complete Pauline corpus, but instead justifiably focuses on a relatively small portion of text, it still demonstrates that the relationship between Paul and Platonism go far beyond mere linguistic borrowings and challenges the notion that “the worldview of the apostle Paul was basically a Stoic one.”<sup>188</sup>

## 4.2. The Prologue of John

Another early Christian text that seems to appropriate certain ideas from the Platonist tradition is the Prologue of John. The four major points of contact between the Johannine Prologue and Platonism are the contrast between being and becoming, the notion of the Logos, prepositional metaphysics, and the notion of the true light.<sup>189</sup>

### 4.2.1. The Contrast between Being and Becoming

The Johannine Prologue emphatically contrasts the Logos with creation. This contrast manifests in the use of the Greek verbs *εἶμι* and *γίνομαι*: whereas the Logos “was,” creation “came into being.” The opposition of being and becoming is carefully maintained throughout the Johannine Prologue and becomes apparent already in the first verses of the text: “In the beginning was (ἦν) the Word (ὁ λόγος), and the Word was (ἦν) with God, and the Word was (ἦν) God. He was (ἦν) in the beginning with God. All things (πάντα) came into being (ἐγένετο) through him, and without him not one thing came into being (ἐγένετο)” (John 1:1–3; NRSV). The only instance where this terminological distinction is disrupted is John 1:14 with its claim that the Word became flesh (ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο). “The uniqueness of this statement sets it off and makes it a focal point in the Prologue.”<sup>190</sup>

The distinction between the Logos which “was” and creation which “became” is in full agreement with the terminological tradition of Platonism. Plato himself described the sensible realm as “that which always becomes, but never is (τὸ γιγνόμενον μὲν αἰεί, ὃν δὲ οὐδέποτε),” and the intelligible realm as “that which always is and has no becoming (τὸ ὄν αἰεί, γένεσιν δὲ οὐκ ἔχον)” (*Tim.* 27d–28a). An even closer parallel to John’s Prologue is *Tim.* 28b, where Plato asks whether the world always was (ἦν) or came into being (γέγονεν), and immediately answers: “It came into being (γέγονεν).”

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<sup>187</sup> Stowers 2009, 155.

<sup>188</sup> Engberg-Pedersen 2010, 11.

<sup>189</sup> This section is heavily indebted to Sterling 2005, 123–30. Since Sterling sometimes presents his case in a very concise manner, in what follows, I will not only summarize his arguments, but also occasionally expand and supplement them with references to other relevant sources and publications.

<sup>190</sup> Sterling 2005, 125.

#### 4.2.2. The Notion of the Logos

The three main personages of the Johannine Prologue are God, the world, and the Logos, which acts as a mediator between the former two. The most important predecessor of the Johannine Logos is, of course, the Logos of Philo. This Logos, which is, as John M. Dillon puts it, “the divine reason-principle,” “the active element of God’s creative thought,” and “a ‘place’ of the Ideas,”<sup>191</sup> plays the central role in the Philonic metaphysics. It should be noted, however, that Philo’s philosophy of the Logos is hardly original: by and large, it is what Dillon terms “orthodox Middle Platonic doctrine.”<sup>192</sup>

First of all, as Sterling points out, as an intermediary metaphysical character, the Logos of Philo is functionally identical to other Middle Platonist intermediaries, e.g., to the demiurgic god (ὁ δημιουργικὸς θεός) of Numenius (see fr. 12 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.18.6–8).<sup>193</sup> Moreover, Philo was not the only Middle Platonist who employed the term λόγος with regard to a metaphysical principle.

In fact, the term seems to appear already in Antiochus. One of our main sources for Antiochus is Cicero’s *Acad.* 1.15–42, where Varro presents the Antiochean history of philosophy. A part of Varro’s speech is a detailed account of the physical doctrines of the early Academy (*Acad.* 1.24–9). According to Brad Inwood, “since we have no reason to think that Antiochus distinguished his own views from those that he claimed for the early Academy we can conclude that the account given here is a good representation of Antiochus’ own theory as well.”<sup>194</sup>

According to *Acad.* 1.28–9, the world is held together by a force (vis) described as “a sentient nature possessed of perfect reason (natura sentiens, in qua ratio perfecta insit)” (trans. C. Brittain). This force is also called the world-soul (animus mundi), an intellect (mens), a perfect wisdom (sapientia perfecta), and God (deus). Cicero’s “ratio” most certainly corresponds to the Greek term λόγος;<sup>195</sup> thus, the Logos, according to Antiochus, is the divine force immanent in the world.

Admittedly, this example is hardly decisive for our case. While Antiochus seems to be the first Platonist to posit the Logos as a metaphysical principle, his concept of the Logos lacks any significant Platonist elements. As Heinrich Dörrie put it, “in der Tat jede Einzelheit, die Antiochos/Varro hier vorträgt, gängiger stoischer Lehre entspricht.”<sup>196</sup> While the expression “animus mundi” would certainly bring to the reader’s mind the cosmology of Plato’s *Timaeus*, the world-soul of Antiochus, unlike that of Plato, lacks the transcendent aspect. Antiochus, therefore, speaks of the world-soul in the same way the Stoics did: it is merely another designation for the governing principle of the universe.<sup>197</sup>

Similarly, what Antiochus says about the Logos is “thoroughly Stoic.”<sup>198</sup> Just as Antiochus claims that the world is held together by the Logos, which is also called God, so also did Zeno, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus teach how “that which is acted upon is unqualified substance, i.e. matter; that which acts is the reason in it, i.e. god (τὸ μὲν οὖν πάσχον εἶναι τὴν ἄποιον οὐσίαν τὴν ὕλην, τὸ δὲ

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<sup>191</sup> Dillon 1996, 159.

<sup>192</sup> Dillon 1996, 161.

<sup>193</sup> See Sterling 2005, 126.

<sup>194</sup> Inwood 2012, 195–6.

<sup>195</sup> See Brittain 2006, 141.

<sup>196</sup> Dörrie 1987, 475.

<sup>197</sup> See Dörrie 1987, 474–5 and Görler 2004, 92.

<sup>198</sup> Reid 1885, 133.

ποιοῦν τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ λόγον τὸν θεόν)” (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 7.134 = *SVF* 1.85; trans. A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley). The Logos of Antiochus, therefore, is not the Platonist mediator between the world and transcendent God, but the Stoic God immanent in the world.

There is, however, at least one Middle Platonist source which provides us with a perfect parallel to Philo’s doctrine of the Logos: Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride*. In this text, Plutarch expounds a Middle Platonist exegesis of Egyptian mythology. He explicitly identifies Horus, Isis, and Osiris with the γένη τριττά of *Tim.* 50a–b, “that which comes to be, that in which it comes to be, and that after which the thing coming to be is modeled, and which is the source of its coming to be (τὸ μὲν γιγνόμενον, τὸ δ’ ἐν ᾧ γίγνεται, τὸ δ’ ὅθεν ἀφομοιούμενον φύεται τὸ γιγνόμενον)” (trans. D. J. Zeyl). Thus, according to Plutarch, Isis is matter (ἡ ὕλη), Osiris the intelligible (τὸ νοητόν), and Horus their offspring, the world (*Is. Os.* 373e–374a).

Whereas Horus is neither pure nor uncontaminated (οὐκ ὦν καθαρὸς οὐδ’ εἰλικρινής), his father, Osiris, is in himself (αὐτὸς καθ’ ἑαυτόν) unmixed and unaffected reason (λόγος ἀμιγῆς καὶ ἀπαθής) (373b). Osiris is thus identified with the Logos.

Furthermore, Plutarch’s Osiris has two aspects, the transcendent and the immanent.<sup>199</sup> He is present both in the body and in the soul of the world: in the soul of the world, Osiris is mind and reason (νοῦς καὶ λόγος), and in its body, he is “that which is ordered and established (τὸ τεταγμένον καὶ καθεστηκός)” (371a–b). In other words, in his immanent aspect, Osiris is “the force of cosmic order and stability.”<sup>200</sup>

The two aspects of Osiris are also identified with his body and soul. Whereas the soul of Osiris is eternal and imperishable (ἄϊδιον καὶ ἄφθαρτον), his body suffers dissolution and destruction. According to Plutarch, “that which is and is intelligible and good (τὸ ὄν καὶ νοητόν καὶ ἀγαθόν) is superior to destruction and change; but the images (εἰκόνες) from it with which the sensible and corporeal (τὸ αἰσθητὸν καὶ σωματικόν) is impressed (ἐκμάττεται), and the principles, forms, and likenesses (λόγοι καὶ εἶδη καὶ ὁμοιότητες) which this takes upon itself, like impressions of seals in wax (καθάπερ ἐν κηρῷ σφραγιῖδες), are not permanently lasting (οὐκ αἰεὶ διαμένουσιν), but disorder and disturbance overtakes them” (*Is. Os.* 373a; trans. F. C. Babbitt, altered). Thus, the body of Osiris is the sum-total of forms immanent in matter.<sup>201</sup> His soul, in turn, should be understood as the sum-total of the transcendent forms, described in 375a–b, where Plutarch says that whereas “the things that are scattered in objects liable to be affected (τὰ ἐν τοῖς παθητικοῖς διεσπαρμένα)” (trans. J. G. Griffiths) are subject to destruction, “God’s principles, forms, and emanations (οἱ λόγοι καὶ εἶδη καὶ ἀπορροαὶ τοῦ θεοῦ) abide in heaven and stars and never change.”<sup>202</sup>

The double role of Plutarch’s Osiris is determined by his intermediary status: in order to act as an intermediary between the transcendent God and the world, he needs to participate in both transcendence and immanence. The very same double role is ascribed to the Logos in Philo: according to *Mos.* 2.127, the cosmic Logos deals with both “the incorporeal and paradigmatic forms (αἱ

<sup>199</sup> Cf. Dillon 1996, 200.

<sup>200</sup> Betz and Smith 1975, 68.

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Jones 1916, 102.

<sup>202</sup> It is worth noting that Plutarch calls the immanent forms “images” (εἰκόνες) and “likenesses” (ὁμοιότητες). In doing so, he seems to indicate that the immanent forms derive from the transcendent ones.



ἁσώματοι καὶ παραδειγματικαὶ ἰδέαι)” and the visible objects (τὰ ὁρατά) that imitate these forms.<sup>203</sup> The fact that Philo’s Logos and Plutarch’s Osiris are functionally identical and that Osiris can also be called the Logos demonstrates that Philo’s philosophy of the Logos was part of a larger Middle Platonist tradition and that this tradition as a whole should be recognized as a possible background for the Johannine Logos.

#### 4.2.3. Prepositional Metaphysics

One of the notable features of the Johannine Prologue is that it repeatedly emphasizes the instrumental agency of the Logos. It is *by means of* the Logos that the universe was created: “all things came into being through him (πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο)” (1:3; NRSV), “the world came into being through him (ὁ κόσμος δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο)” (1:10; NRSV). The notion that the universe was created “through” (διὰ) the Logos immediately reminds the reader of the metaphysics of the Philonic corpus.

According to Philo, God used the Logos as an instrument (*Leg.* 3.96: ὃ καθάπερ ὄργάνῳ προσχρησάμενος ἐκοσμοποιεῖ; *Migr.* 6: ἐκοσμοπλάσσει χρησάμενος ὄργάνῳ τούτῳ), through which (*Sacr.* 8: δι’ οὗ καὶ ὁ σύμπας κόσμος ἐδημιουργεῖτο; *Spec.* 1.81: δι’ οὗ σύμπας ὁ κόσμος ἐδημιουργεῖτο) he created the world. Sometimes Philo applies this language of instrumentality to Wisdom and says that the world was created through her (*Fug.* 109: δι’ ἧς τὰ ὅλα ἦλθεν εἰς γένεσιν; *Det.* 54: δι’ ἧς ἀπετελέσθη τὸ πᾶν), which, as Sterling puts it, “is not terribly surprising since he can thus equate the Logos with Wisdom.”<sup>204</sup>

For the purposes of the present discussion the key Philonic passage is *Cher.* 125–7. Here, Philo formulates his position on causes. According to him, “to bring something into being, many things must come together (πρὸς τὴν τινος γένεσιν πολλὰ δεῖ συνελθεῖν).” Namely, there are four such things: the cause (τὸ αἷτιον), matter (ἡ ὕλη), the instrument (τὸ ἐργαλεῖον or τὸ ὄργανον), and the purpose (ἡ αἷτία). Philo states that the cause is τὸ ὑφ’ οὗ, “that by which,” matter is τὸ ἐξ οὗ, “that from which,” the instrument is τὸ δι’ οὗ, “that through which,” and the purpose is τὸ δι’ ὅ, “that for which.” Philo then applies this fourfold classification to the creation of the universe: “its cause (αἷτιον) is God, by whom (ὑφ’ οὗ) it has come into being, its material (ὕλη) the four elements, from which (ἐξ ὧν) it was compounded, its instrument (ὄργανον) the Logos of God, through which (δι’ οὗ) it was framed, and the purpose (αἷτία) of the building is the goodness of the craftsman” (*Cher.* 127; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, slightly altered).

This passage is one of the finest examples of what is sometimes termed prepositional metaphysics, which David T. Runia defines as “the practice, frequently found in both Middle and Neoplatonism, of using prepositional phrases to express the causes required for an object (and especially the cosmos) to come into being.”<sup>205</sup> The Middle Platonists produced several different schemes of prepositional phrases, e.g. the threefold one attested in *Plac.* 1.11.2 (ὑφ’ οὗ, “that by

<sup>203</sup> See also the discussion of this passage in chapter 11.

<sup>204</sup> Sterling 1997, 229.

<sup>205</sup> Runia 1986, 171. The phrase “Metaphysik der Präpositionen” was introduced in Theiler 1930, ix and 33.

which,” ἐξ οὗ, “that from which,” and πρὸς ὃ, “that to which”)<sup>206</sup> and the fivefold one attested in Seneca, *Ep.* 65.8 (id ex quo, “that from which,” id a quo, “that by which,” id in quo, “that in which,” id ad quod, “that according to which,” and id propter quod, “that for which”).

It seems that, apart from Philo’s scheme in *Cher.* 125–7 (see also *QG* 1.58; *Prov.* 1.23), none of the attested Middle Platonist classifications of causes includes the instrumental cause (“that through which”). Yet, as Runia points out, “the use of the instrumental cause in order to ‘liberate’ God from the manual labour of creation was a concern for most Middle Platonists and led to the doctrine of a first and second god.”<sup>207</sup> Moreover, as the following parallels demonstrate, Philo is hardly unique in his technical use of the preposition διὰ. My first example comes from Atticus’ lost polemical treatise:

Plato claims for the world that it is the noblest work made by the noblest of craftsmen, and invests the maker of all with a power (δύναμις) through which (δι’ ἧς) he made the world which did not previously exist, and having made it, will if he so wishes preserve it ever in safety (Atticus, fr. 4 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.6.7; trans. E. H. Gifford, slightly altered).

As Carl Andersen pointed out, this unnamed demiurgical “power” is the world-soul of Plato’s *Timaeus*.<sup>208</sup> Indeed, in another fragment from the same work (fr. 8 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.12.1), Atticus identifies the world-soul (ψυχή), providence (πρόνοια), and nature (φύσις) and claims that, according to Plato, the world-soul puts everything in order and penetrates everything (τοῦ Πλάτωνος λέγοντος τὴν ψυχὴν διακοσμεῖν τὰ πάντα διήκουσαν διὰ πάντων).<sup>209</sup> What is important for the present discussion is that Atticus emphasizes the agency of the world-soul in creation in the same fashion Philo (and John) emphasizes the instrumental agency of the Logos.

My second example comes from another lost work, Porphyry’s commentary on Aristotle’s *Physica*. In one of the extant fragments from this commentary (fr. 120 Smith = Simplicius, *Comm. Phys.* 10.35–11.4 Diels), Porphyry summarizes Aristotle’s doctrine of four causes (i.e. material, formal, efficient, and final; see *Phys.* 194b–195a). Just like the Middle Platonists, Porphyry uses prepositional phrases to describe these causes: first, τὸ ἐξ οὗ, “that from which,” or matter (ἡ ὕλη), second, τὸ κατ’ ὃ, “that after which,” or the form (τὸ εἶδος), third, τὸ ὑφ’ οὗ, “that by which,” or “that which makes” (τὸ ποιοῦν), and fourth, τὸ δι’ ὃ, “that for which,” or the purpose (τὸ τέλος). Then, Porphyry claims that, according to Plato, there are two more causes. As George E. Karamanolis puts it, Porphyry’s point is that “Aristotle adopted an incomplete set of Plato’s principles” and that “the doctrine outlined in Aristotle’s text must be credited entirely to Plato.”<sup>210</sup>

<sup>206</sup> It is worth noting that the author of *De placitis* is unknown. As Lebedev 1988, 813–5, has pointed out, its attribution to “Aëtius” is very problematic. The counterarguments in Mansfeld and Runia 1997–2010, 1:333–8, are hardly to the point.

<sup>207</sup> Runia 1986, 174.

<sup>208</sup> Andersen 1952–53, 191–2.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Pseudo-Origen, *Ref.* 1.21.1 = *SVF* 1.153: according to Chrysippus and Zeno, God’s providence (πρόνοια) “penetrates everything (διὰ πάντων διήκειν).”

<sup>210</sup> Karamanolis 2006, 273.

According to Porphyry, the two missing causes are τὸ πρὸς ὃ, “that to which,” or the model (τὸ παράδειγμα), and τὸ δι’ οὗ, “that through which,” or the instrument (τὸ ὀργανικόν).<sup>211</sup> This last cause from Porphyry’s list immediately invites comparison with Philo’s notion of the instrument (τὸ ὄργανον) as “that through which” (τὸ δι’ οὗ) something comes about. Since it is unlikely that Porphyry was familiar with *De cherubim*, it seems reasonable to conclude that both Philo and Porphyry learned about the instrumental cause from the Middle Platonist tradition.

As these two examples demonstrate, Philo was not the only Middle Platonist who speculated about an intermediate figure “through which” God created the universe, nor was he the only Middle Platonist who recognized “that through which” as one of the causes. What is unique about Philo is that in his cosmology he assigns the instrumental function to the Logos. Thus, as far as the concept of creation through the Logos is concerned, the Johannine Prologue seems to be indebted not to Middle Platonism in general, but rather either directly to Philo, or, if we suppose that there were other Jews with similar metaphysical convictions, to the Platonizing trend within Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>212</sup> Be that as it may, it is clear that, as this survey has demonstrated, the concept of the instrument in creation is not merely a Philonic/Hellenistic Jewish concept (obviously, not everything in Philo is Platonist), but also a Middle Platonist concept, which the Johannine Prologue received via Philo or some other like-minded Platonizing Jewish intellectuals.

#### 4.2.4. The Notion of the True Light

In John 1:9, the Logos is described rather Platonically as “the true light, which enlightens everyone (τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον).” The Platonist background of the notion of the Johannine true light was suggested already by C. H. Dodd in his seminal study on the fourth gospel.<sup>213</sup> Yet it was not until recently that the most striking parallel to the Prologue’s “true light” was discovered. As George H. van Kooten has demonstrated, this expression can be traced back to the eschatological myth of Plato’s *Phaedo*, where Socrates speaks about “the true heaven, the true light (τὸ ἀληθινὸν φῶς), and the true earth” (109e).<sup>214</sup>

According to van Kooten, “In the entire ensuing Platonic tradition, this true light, the ἀληθινὸν φῶς, is also known as the intellectual light, the νοερὸν φῶς, or, alternatively, as the mental light, the νοητὸν φῶς, the light which falls in the province of νοῦς, as opposed to the visible, aesthetic light.”<sup>215</sup> The intelligible light is “true,” because the sensible light is merely its derivative. According to Plato’s analogy of the sun, the sun is “the offspring of the good (τὰγαθόν), which the good begot as its own analogue.” The sun’s relation to the visible realm is thus the same as that of the good to the intelligible realm (*Resp.* 508b–c). Moreover, as we learn from the allegory of the cave, the light of the fire is to

<sup>211</sup> This is the earliest attestation of the sixfold classification of causes which became quite popular in Neoplatonism. Cf. Simplicius, *Comm. Phys.* 3.16–9 and 316.23–6: according to the Peripatetics, there are two causes in the proper sense (τὰ κυρίως αἰτία), the efficient (τὸ ποιητικὸν αἶτιον) and the final (τὸ τελικὸν αἶτιον), and two contributory causes (τὰ συναίτια), the material (τὸ ὑλικὸν αἶτιον) and the formal (τὸ εἰδικὸν αἶτιον); Plato, however, expanded the list and added the paradigmatic cause (τὸ παραδειγματικὸν αἶτιον) to the first group and the instrumental cause (τὸ ὀργανικὸν αἶτιον) to the second.

<sup>212</sup> Cf. Tobin 1990, 259–60.

<sup>213</sup> See Dodd 1953, 139–40.

<sup>214</sup> See van Kooten 2005, 151–3.

<sup>215</sup> van Kooten 2005, 152.

the sunlight as the sun is to the form of the good (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα). It is this idea that gives birth to both the sensible light and the sun as its sovereign (φῶς καὶ ὁ τούτου κύριος) in the visible realm, whereas in the intelligible realm the good is the sovereign (κυρία) itself (517b–c).

The “true light” as an expression thus has a Platonic background, and it is the Platonist tradition that allows us to gain insight into the meaning of this curious expression in the Johannine Prologue. Moreover, the Platonist interpretation of the expression fits the immediate context in which the expression is used. As van Kooten has pointed out, the notion that the true light “enlightens everyone” (John 1:9) makes sense in light of Platonist metaphysics; according to *Resp.* 540a, the good itself (τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτό) is “that which provides light for all (τὸ πᾶσι φῶς παρέχον).”

It follows that the Johannine “true light” is the intelligible light of the Platonist tradition. As Dodd put it, τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν of the Prologue “is the archetypal light, αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς, of which every visible light in this world is a μίμημα or symbol.”<sup>216</sup>

The four points of contact between Platonism and John’s Prologue seem to provide us with sufficient evidence to suggest that the author of this text drew on Platonist metaphysics. Each of the four Johannine notions outlined above should be regarded as a part of a cumulative argument for the Platonizing nature of the Prologue. Treated individually, these notions may perhaps be given alternative explanations; together, they point in one direction, viz. to Platonism.

Whether or not these conclusions may be transposed from John’s Prologue to the rest of the gospel goes beyond the scope of this discussion. It is worth noting, however, that several scholars have contributed to the discussion of this question, e.g. van Kooten proposed that “the resonances of particular Platonic themes from the cave parable make themselves heard throughout John’s Gospel.”<sup>217</sup> Similarly, Harold W. Attridge has recently argued for the Platonist origins of the Johannine “religious epistemology.”<sup>218</sup>

### 4.3. Conclusions

As this survey has shown, though the history of the interactions between early Christianity and Platonism is still to be written, some important research has already been done. The works by Wasserman and Stowers on Rom 7:7–25 and those by Sterling and van Kooten on John’s Prologue make a solid case for the claim that, in order to gain better insight into these texts, we must recognize the fact that their authors appropriated certain ideas from Platonist moral psychology and metaphysics. Whereas the conclusions reached by these scholars are by no means set in stone and to some extent may be contested in future research, they have certainly laid the foundation for the discussion of the Platonizing tendencies in early Christian texts. It is the goal of the present dissertation to contribute to this discussion.

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<sup>216</sup> Dodd 1953, 140.

<sup>217</sup> van Kooten 2005, 176.

<sup>218</sup> “Some Early Christian Engagement with Platonism” (paper presented at the conference “From Stoicism to Platonism? On a Possibly Asymmetrical Relationship of the Two Philosophical Schools in the Period 100 BCE–100 CE,” Copenhagen, August 22, 2014).

## Part II. *Thomas* and Platonism

The following seven chapters comprise the main part of this dissertation, wherein I contribute to the discussion of the impact of Platonism on *Thomas*. In chapters 5 (“*Thomas* and the Platonists on the World”) and 6 (“*Thomas* and the Platonists on the Body and Soul”), I reflect on the Platonist impact on the Thomasine views of the phenomenal realm, i.e. the world and the human compound. Having discussed the Thomasine understanding of the mundane, I turn to its understanding of the divine, which, of course, goes hand in hand with the notion of human perfection. Thus, chapters 7 (“*Thomas* and the Platonists on Oneness”), 8 (“*Thomas* and the Platonists on Stability”), 9 (“*Thomas* and the Platonists on Immutability and Indivisibility”), and 10 (“*Thomas* and the Platonists on Freedom from Anger”) deal with Thomasine and Platonist views on ultimate reality and assimilation to the divine. Finally, in chapter 11 (“Thomasine Metaphysics of the Image and Its Platonist Background”), I discuss the impact of Platonism on the Thomasine metaphysics of the image; the notion of the image, as I argue, is essential to the understanding of the Thomasine views on both the mundane and the divine.

## 5. *Thomas* and the Platonists on the World

Together with chapter 6, chapter 5 deals with the key anthropological categories of antiquity, *σῶμα* and *ψυχή*, and the way they are treated in *Thomas*. In this chapter, I discuss the Thomasine views on the world as a body and on bodily existence in general. My focus will be on sayings 56 and 80. As I will try to demonstrate, these two sayings draw their inspiration, on the one hand, from the fount of Platonist wisdom, yet, on the other hand, they may be regarded as pessimistic Thomasine rejoinders to an optimistic Stoic-Platonist attitude towards the visible universe. I will also ascertain whether the message of sayings 56 and 80 is consistent with Thomasine soteriology.

### 5.1. The Text of Sayings 56 and 80

Since sayings 56 and 80 are strikingly similar, the first question I address is whether they should be considered identical. I then turn to the discussion of their Platonist background and their connection with other Thomasine sayings. Finally, I will consider the polemical overtones of the two sayings.

56:1 πεξε ιϥ ξε  
 πεταρσοϥων<sup>219</sup> πκοσμοс  
 αϥρε ευπτωμα  
 56:2 αϥω πεταρρε ε<γ>πτωμα<sup>220</sup>  
 πκοσμοс ι̅πωα ι̅μοϥ αν

56:1 Jesus says:  
 “Whoever has come to know the world  
 has found a corpse.  
 56:2 And whoever has found <a> corpse,  
 of him the world is not worthy.”<sup>221</sup>

80:1 πεξε ιϥ ξε  
 πεταρσοϥων πκοσμοс  
 αϥρε επсωμα  
 80:2 πεταρρε δε επсωμα  
 πκοσμοс ι̅πωα ι̅μοϥ αν

80:1 Jesus says:  
 “Whoever has come to know the world  
 has found the (dead) body.  
 80:2 But whoever has found the (dead) body,  
 of him the world is not worthy.”

The structure of both sayings is clearly chiasmic: world–corpse (body) / corpse (body)–world. The expression “of him the world is not worthy” (πκοσμοс ι̅πωα ι̅μοϥ αν) parallels “of whom the world was not worthy” (ὧν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος) of Heb 11:38.<sup>222</sup> As Harold W. Attridge points out, its phrasing follows the established proverbial pattern, e.g. Prov 8:11 LXX (nothing precious is

<sup>219</sup> In NHC II εταρ is used interchangeably with ενταρ/ι̅τωα; “ετα” in Layton 1989, 1:10 (§12) is incorrect and should be corrected to “εταρ.” Cf. Nagel 1969, 448 and Funk 1984, 111.

<sup>220</sup> I accept the emendation suggested by the *editio princeps* (see Guillaumont et al. 1959, 30; cf. Nagel 2014, 134). Layton 1989, 1:74, attempts to remain faithful to the reading of NHC II: πεταρρεε α̅πτωμα. To explain the form ϥεε, Layton refers to Polotsky 1957, 348–349, where Polotsky describes the reduplication of the last vowel of a monosyllabic word if the word stands before a copular pronoun. This phenomenon has nothing to do with *Thomas* 56:2, since ϥεε here is not followed by a copular pronoun. Admittedly, the form ϥεε, along with the form ϥνε, is attested in Sahidic as a variant spelling of ϥε (see Crum 1939, 637a–638b, s.v. ϥε; the form ϥεε is also attested in P. Bodmer VI [dialect P]). The problem, however, is with the fact that the form ϥεε is not attested elsewhere in NHC II. The anarthrous ι̅τωμα in *Thomas* 56:2 is also problematic, especially since in *Thomas* 56:1 ι̅τωμα has an indefinite article. The emendation of α to γ seems to be the most logical way to solve both problems.

<sup>221</sup> I have modified the translation of the Berliner Arbeitskreis in keeping with the emendation proposed in the previous footnote.

<sup>222</sup> As noted in Marjanen 1998a, 127.

worthy of wisdom) and Matt 10:37 (he who is too attached to his family is not worthy of Jesus; cf. *Thomas* 55).<sup>223</sup>

The point of both sayings is the same: the one who recognizes the unworthiness of the world is worthier than the world itself. Similar sentiments are attested not only in Heb 11:38 (cf. Heb 11:7), but also in the wide range of early Jewish and early Christian documents.<sup>224</sup>

The first matter that deserves discussion is whether the two sayings are identical in their meaning and whether the terms πτωμα and σωμα are synonyms. In his seminal work on the doublets in *Thomas*, Jón Ma. Ásgeirsson answered these questions affirmatively. According to Ásgeirsson, unlike the other Thomasine doublets, the doublet that constitute sayings 56 and 80 is recitational, i.e. the two sayings are “practically identical except for the commonly interchangeable concepts for ‘body’ and ‘corpse’ and less relevant variations in expression and/or vocabulary.”<sup>225</sup>

Ásgeirsson’s claim is most probably correct with regard to the Coptic text of *Thomas*. The translators who produced the Sahidic New Testament probably did not see any difference between these two words: as Antti Marjanen points out,<sup>226</sup> in the Sahidic New Testament, the Greek word πτωμα is most often rendered with the Greek loan-word σωμα.<sup>227</sup> Another important example comes from the study by W. A. Girgis. While the word πτωμα never occurs in the Sahidic New Testament,<sup>228</sup> the translator of the book of Judges decided to retain it, but also found it necessary to explain with the word σωμα, “which was more familiar.”<sup>229</sup> Hence, he translated ἐξέκλινεν ἰδεῖν τὸ πτωμα τοῦ λέοντος (“he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion”) as ἀφρακτῇ ἐναγ ἐπεπτωμα ἢ ἐπσωμα μπισογῖ (“he turned aside to see the carcass, or the body, of the lion”) (Judg 14:8).<sup>230</sup> These examples demonstrate that those who translated, copied, and read the Coptic *Thomas* most probably did not see any difference between sayings 56 and 80.

I am inclined, however, to think that, in the Greek *Vorlage* of *Thomas*, the two sayings did not simply reiterate, but rather resonated with and supplemented each other. Even though it is clear that the word σωμα can refer to a *dead* body (see LSJ, s. v. σωμα; cf. the Berliner Arbeitskreis’ translation of *Thomas* 80, cited above), I would like to argue that the difference between these two sayings goes beyond stylistic variation. The fact that *Thomas* 80 uses the word σωμα is significant.

Perhaps it could be conjectured that σωμα in *Thomas* 80 renders πτωμα of the Greek *Vorlage*, as it does in the Sahidic New Testament. This would mean that the Coptic translator was inconsistent, since he forgot to dispose of πτωμα not only in *Thomas* 56, but also in *Thomas* 60. It is, however, difficult to believe that the translator was that careless. As Simon Gathercole points out, the comparison of the Coptic *Thomas* with P.Oxy. 1, 654, and 655 shows that in almost every case where

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<sup>223</sup> Attridge 1989b, 351.

<sup>224</sup> See, e.g., the texts referred to in BDAG, s.v. κόσμος (7b).

<sup>225</sup> Ásgeirsson 1997, 78–9.

<sup>226</sup> Marjanen 1998a, 126.

<sup>227</sup> At least four times: Matt 24:28; Mark 6:29; Rev 11:8 and 9. See Lefort 1950, 291–5. The two other instances, Matt 14:12 and Mk 15:45, are uncertain, since πτωμα might have been replaced by σωμα already in the Greek *Vorlagen* of the Coptic translations, as was the case, for instance, with the Majority Text (see the apparatus to NA<sup>28</sup>, ad loc.). The only passage that does not render πτωμα with σωμα is Rev 11:9, where πτωμα occurs twice and in the first instance is rendered as ρωτῆ.

<sup>228</sup> Draguet 1960, 152.

<sup>229</sup> Girgis 1963–1964, 71.

<sup>230</sup> Sahidic text from Thompson 1911, 215.

a Greek loan-word is used in the Coptic text, the same word is also used in the Greek fragments.<sup>231</sup> Therefore, there is no reason to suspect that the Greek loan-words used in the Coptic translation of the sayings that did not survive in Greek are different from the words that were used in the Greek *Vorlage*.

## 5.2. The World as a Body and as a Corpse

According to *Thomas* 80, the world is wretched, because it is a body. While the conclusion of this statement would probably sound unusual for an ancient philosopher, its premise was universally acknowledged. Both the Platonists and the Stoics claimed that the world is a body, ὁ κόσμος σῶμά ἐστιν (Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 9.79 = *SVF* 2.1013).<sup>232</sup> This idea appears for the first time in Plato's dialogues. According to *Phileb.* 29e, the world is a body. It is, however, not just a body; since it is in every respect better than our body, it is what produces our bodies, and since our bodies have souls, it must be animated (30a). The same holds true for a similar account in *Timaeus*. The universe, which is sometimes called "heaven" (οὐρανός), sometimes "world" (κόσμος), is visible (ὄρατός), tangible (ἅπτός), and corporeal (σῶμα ἔχων) (28b). But the world also has the invisible constituent: God put soul in body and reason in soul (νοῦς μὲν ἐν ψυχῇ, ψυχὴ δ' ἐν σώματι), thus making the world "an animated and intelligent living being" (ζῶον ἐμψυχον ἐννοον) (30b).<sup>233</sup> In Middle Platonism the idea that the world has two constituents, a body and a soul, became a common assumption:<sup>234</sup>

There are two constituent parts of the universe, body and soul (Plutarch, *Plat. quaest.* 1001b; trans. H. Cherniss).

The components out of which the world is put together are two, to wit, body and soul, of which the former is visible and tangible, while the latter is invisible and intangible, and each of them possesses a different power and constitution (Alcinous, *Didasc.* 13.1; trans. J. Dillon).

Thus, a philosophically-minded ancient reader of *Thomas* 80 would definitely agree with the first part of the saying: it was beyond dispute that the world was (or had) a body. On the other hand, he or she

<sup>231</sup> See Gathercole 2012, 106–8. The only exceptions are the instances where different conjunctions are used (αλλὰ instead of καί in *Thomas* 3:3; οὐδὲ instead of iterated οὔτε in *Thomas* 32) and where the translator uses a cognate word (εἰπε ἡπισκωβαντον ἡσκαβαντον instead of σαββατίζω τὸ σάββατον in *Thomas* 27:2; ῥοεραπεγε instead of ποιέω θεραπείας in *Thomas* 31:2). *Thomas* 30:2 is a special case: the Greek loan-word η has no parallel in the Greek version of the saying. As Wilfried Eisele convincingly argues, the Coptic version of the saying witnesses a later attempt to harmonize the saying with Matt 18:20 (cf. σηαγ η in *Thomas* 30:2 and δύο ἥ in Matt 18:20). See Eisele 2010, 158–9 and 171.

<sup>232</sup> See also *SVF* 2.550 = Plutarch, *Stoic. rep.* 1054e–f: according to Chrysippus, "the universe is a perfect body (τέλειον μὲν ὁ κόσμος σῶμά ἐστιν) whereas the parts of the universe are not perfect, since their existence is not independent, but is their particular relation to the whole" (trans. H. Cherniss); cf. Philo, *Plant.* 7: the world "is the largest of material bodies (τὸ μέγιστον σωμάτων ἐστὶ), and holds in its bosom as parts of itself a mass of other material bodies" (trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker).

<sup>233</sup> The view that the world was a living being was later embraced by the Stoics; see *SVF* 2.528, 2.633–45.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. Varro, *Ant.* fr. 226 Cardauns = Augustine, *Civ.* 7.6: "God is the soul of the world, which the Greeks call κόσμος, and this world itself is God. But, he says, just as a wise man, though formed of body and soul, is nonetheless called wise by virtue of his soul, so the world is called God by virtue of its soul, even though it too consists of soul and body" (trans. R. W. Dyson, slightly altered). For the Stoic background to this passage, see Cardauns 1976, 226.



would most probably find its second part confusing. Why would the world having a body lead to the conclusion that the world is wretched?

The answer is given in saying 56: the world is wretched, because it is a corpse, a *dead* body. While *Thomas* agrees with the Platonists that the world is a body, it additionally claims that the world is *nothing but* a body. In other words, the world has no soul. It is not a living being; it is a dead thing. The one who understands the true nature of the world understands that, unlike this lifeless world, he or she has a soul and hence is a living being. It is this understanding that makes him or her worthier than the world.

### 5.3. Bodies are Corpses

As I have tried to demonstrate, whereas at the Coptic stage of the transmission of the text of *Thomas*, sayings 56 and 80 were probably considered identical, at the Greek stage, they probably were not. While *Thomas* 80 argues that the world is worthless by referring to the *locus communis* that the world is a body, *Thomas* 56 spells out the reason why it is a bad thing that the world is a body: it is so because it is a corpse, a dead body. *Thomas* seems thereby to allude to the Platonist notion that bodies are nothing but corpses.

It appears that, in sayings 56 and 80, *Thomas* intends to engage in a debate with the Platonist tradition: it agrees with the Platonists that the world is a body, but, unlike Platonists, it does not feel any reverence for the world. Quite to the contrary, *Thomas* uses the Platonist metaphor to argue that, due to the very fact that the world is a body, it should be despised. Perhaps in doing so, *Thomas* even wants to correct its teachers (being, in a way, a better Platonist than Plato): if we all agree that the world is a body, why don't you treat it with contempt, like I do?

In what follows, I offer an overview of the use of the notion that bodies are corpses in ancient philosophical and religious literature. The purpose of this survey is to demonstrate that this notion was not only quite popular, but also as a general rule occurred in Platonist and Platonizing sources.<sup>235</sup>

Notably, this notion never occurs in Plato's dialogues. It is quite likely, however, that without Plato it would never come into existence. Its closest parallel is the *σῶμα-σῆμα* formula, which is either explicitly mentioned or alluded to three times in Plato's dialogues, viz. *Crat.* 400c, *Gorg.* 493a, and *Phaedr.* 250c.

It should be noted that Plato appears to be the earliest witness of the *σῶμα-σῆμα* formula. Contrary to E. R. Dodds' opinion,<sup>236</sup> it is most certainly not Heraclitean, since fr. 47d<sup>3</sup> Marcovich<sup>237</sup> seems to be a later reformulation of an obscure saying of Heraclitus that mentions neither bodies nor tombs,<sup>238</sup> it is clearly inauthentic. The same holds true for the famous saying ascribed to Philolaus.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> It is worth noting that this notion also appears in two Stoic works: Epictetus' *Dissertationes* (1.19.9; 2.19.27; 3.10.15; 3.22.41) and Marcus Aurelius' *Meditationes* (4.41; 9.24). As I have already pointed out in chapter 2, Epictetus probably appropriated the notion that bodies are corpses from contemporary Platonists; as for Marcus Aurelius, he explicitly states that he borrowed the notion from Epictetus.

<sup>236</sup> See Dodds 1959, 300.

<sup>237</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Pyr.* 3.230: "Heraclitus says that both living and dying are in all living and in all dying: while we live our souls are dead and buried in us, and when we die our souls revive" (trans. J. Annas and J. Barnes).

<sup>238</sup> Fr. 47a Marcovich = fr. 22 B 62 Diels-Kranz = Pseudo-Origen, *Ref.* 9.10.6: "Immortals are mortal, mortals immortal, living the others' death, dead in the others' life" (trans. C.H. Kahn).

<sup>239</sup> Fr. 44 B 14 Diels-Kranz = Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.3.17.1: "It is also worth noting Philolaus' remark. The follower of Pythagoras says, 'The theologians and seers of old are witnesses that the soul is yoked (συνέζευκται) to the body to undergo acts of punishment (διὰ τινὰς τιμωρίας) and is buried in it as in a grave'" (trans. J. Ferguson).

As Walter Burkert demonstrated, it is inauthentic and probably dependent on Aristotle's *Protrepticus* (cited below).<sup>240</sup> Despite the fact that these two sayings most certainly postdate Plato, they are particularly noteworthy, since they indicate that later authors used the *σῶμα-σῆμα* formula to express their negative feelings towards bodily existence.

While there can be no doubt that in later times the *σῶμα-σῆμα* formula was used to express a negative attitude towards the body, it is quite remarkable that the close reading of the three aforementioned Platonic passages may cast some doubt on the opinion that, in Plato's view, the body is the tomb of the soul. The most detailed discussion of the formula that Plato offers is in *Cratylus*:

Thus, some people (τινές) say that it is the tomb (σῆμα) of the soul, on the grounds that it is entombed (τεθαμμένη) in its present life; and again, it is correctly called "a sign" (σῆμα), because the soul signifies (σημαίνει) whatever it wants to signify by means of the body. But I think it is most likely the followers of Orpheus (οἱ ἀμφὶ Ὀρφέα) who gave the body its name, with the idea that the soul is being punished (δίκην διδούσης τῆς ψυχῆς) for something, and that the body is an enclosure (περίβολος) or prison (δεσμωτήριον) to keep the soul safe (ἵνα σῶζεται)—as the name *σῶμα* itself suggests—until the penalty is paid; for, on this view, not even a single letter of the word needs to be changed (Plato, *Crat.* 400c; trans. C.D.C. Reeve, altered).

The thorough interpretation of this famous passage from *Cratylus* is beyond the scope of this study, so I would like to limit myself to pointing out several details that are relevant to the discussion of the idea that body is a corpse.

It is clear that, in view of Plato's Socrates, there are at least two different etymologies of the word *σῶμα*: while, according to "some people," it derives from the noun *σῆμα* and means either "tomb" or "sign," the "followers of Orpheus" believe that it derives from the verb *σώζω*, "to keep safe." It is worth noting that, according to Socrates, it was the Orphics who coined the word *σῶμα* and thus the latter etymology should be preferred to the former one.<sup>241</sup> This in mind, we can now proceed to the second Platonic passage wherein the *σῶμα-σῆμα* formula is mentioned:

SOCRATES: So then those who have no need of anything are wrongly said to be happy?

CALLICLES: Yes, for in that case stones and corpses (οἱ νεκροί) would be happiest.

SOCRATES: But then the life of those people you call happiest is a strange one, too. I shouldn't be surprised that Euripides' lines are true when he says:

*But who knows whether being alive is being dead  
And being dead is being alive?*

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<sup>240</sup> See Burkert 1972, 248. See also the discussion of the provenance of the Philolaic fragments in Thesleff 1961, 92–3 and 102–4.

<sup>241</sup> Cf. Sedley 2003b, 75; Dodds 1956, 169–70.

Perhaps (ἴσως) in reality we're dead. Once I even heard one of the wise men (τῖς τῶν σοφῶν) say that we are now dead and that our bodies are our tombs (σῆμα) (*Gorg.* 493a; trans. D.J. Zeyl).

Although one might find the context of this Platonic passage to be “playful and even ironic,”<sup>242</sup> the possibility that Plato adhered to the view that the body was the tomb of the soul cannot be ruled out. It is significant, however, that, in this passage, Socrates makes several reservations: he says that we are “probably” (ἴσως) dead and ascribes the σῶμα-σῆμα formula to a certain “wise man” (it is worth noting that, in *Cratylus*, the same view is ascribed to “some people”). As Rein Ferwerda points out, these details could be interpreted as Plato's attempt to distance himself from the view that the body is the soul's tomb.<sup>243</sup>

The third passage that is relevant for our discussion, *Phaedr.* 250c, is the only instance where Plato clearly accepts the σῶμα-σῆμα formula. The way Plato interprets it in *Phaedrus* is, however, a matter of debate. In this passage, Socrates discusses the experience of the soul that reaches “the place beyond heaven”:

That was the ultimate vision, and we saw it in pure light because we were pure ourselves, not buried (ἀσήμεντοι) in this thing we are carrying around now, which we call a body (σῶμα), locked (δεδεσμευμένοι) in it like an oyster in its shell (*Phaedr.* 250c; trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff).

It is customary to understand the adjective ἀσήμεντος in this sentence as “not entombed.”<sup>244</sup> The usual meaning of the word is, however, “unmarked,” and one might conclude that ἀσήμεντος has the same meaning in *Phaedr.* 250c, i.e. that, in this passage, Plato speaks of the body as a sign of the soul. Ferwerda passionately defends this interpretation of ἀσήμεντος in *Phaedr.* 250c, arguing, “There is no indication whatsoever that Plato had something else in mind.”<sup>245</sup>

This statement, however, does not seem to be justified. It is quite remarkable that, in the very same passage where the word ἀσήμεντος is used, Socrates says that those who carry around their bodies are imprisoned (δεδεσμευμένοι) in them.<sup>246</sup> The notion that our bodies are our prisons reveals an attitude towards the body that is by no means positive. The famous discussion of the hostile relations between the body and the soul in *Phaedo* (64a–70b) is especially revealing: the body constitutes the chains (δεσμοί) of the soul (67d); it is evil (66b), so we should disdain the body (65d) and separate the soul from it as far as possible (67c). Later on (82e), Socrates compares the human body to a prison (εἰργμός): according to him, the soul in the body is enchained and fast-bound (διαδεδεμένη καὶ προσκεκολλημένη).<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Ferwerda 1985, 269.

<sup>243</sup> See Ferwerda 1985, 270.

<sup>244</sup> See LSJ, s.v. ἀσήμεντος (III).

<sup>245</sup> Ferwerda 1985, 273.

<sup>246</sup> Cf. also the quoted above passage from *Crat.* 400c, where Socrates reports the Orphic notion that the body is the soul's prison (δεσμωτήριον).

<sup>247</sup> What Plato says in *Phaedo* appears to be very straightforward, so I do not find it possible to agree with Vogel 1988, 242, who claims that, in Aristotle's *Protrepticus* (cited below), “we find quite a different approach” to the human body. Quite the contrary, in this regard, Aristotle appears to be a devout disciple of his great teacher.

It follows that in *Phaedr.* 250c, the word ἀσήμεντος should also be understood as an expression of negative attitude towards the body. While the meaning “not entombed” is unusual, it seems to fit the context. There can be little doubt that, in *Phaedr.* 250c, Plato employed the word ἀσήμεντος as an allusion to the σῶμα-σῆμα formula (ἀσήμεντοι ... σῶμα), which, according to *Crat.* 400c, has two valid interpretations: the body is either the soul’s tomb or the soul’s sign. Given that *Phaedr.* 250c explicitly condemns the body as the soul’s prison, it is hard to see why the former aspect of this formula should not be at play in this passage.

In sum, *Phaedr.* 250c, appears to be an occasion where Plato adheres to the notion that our bodies are our tombs. This conclusion suggests that the reservations made earlier about two other relevant Platonic passages (*Crat.* 400c and *Gorg.* 493a) may, in fact, be unnecessary. Although, in *Crat.* 400c, Plato disagrees with those who derive the word σῶμα from σῆμα, he may very well be in agreement with the sentiment behind this etymology. Similarly, he may agree with the “wise man” mentioned in *Gorg.* 493a.

The notion that bodies are tombs is not terribly different from the notion that bodies are corpses. The first document that attests this view is Aristotle’s dialogue *Protrepticus*. Unfortunately, the complete text of the dialogue is lost and only a few fragments quoted by later authors have survived.<sup>248</sup> Luckily, the authenticity of the relevant fragment (fr. 60 Rose = fr. 10b Ross = fr. B 106–7 Düring) is beyond doubt: two different authors, Iamblichus and Cicero, attest it independently of each other and the latter even explicitly attributes it to Aristotle. In a recent study, D. S. Hutchinson and Monte Ransome Johnson convincingly describe the text cited by Iamblichus as “a pure quotation from Aristotle” and maintain that the most probable source of the quotation is *Protrepticus*, though there is a possibility that it comes from another Aristotelian dialogue that contained an exhortation to philosophy (e.g. *Eudemus* or *De philosophia*).<sup>249</sup>

Iamblichus, *Protr.* 8 (trans. J. Barnes and G. Lawrence)

Augustine, *C. Jul.* 4.15.78 = Cicero, *Hort.* fr. 95 Müller (trans. W. D. Ross)

Which of us, looking to these facts, would think himself happy and blessed? For all of us are from the very beginning (as they say in the initiation rites) shaped by nature as though for punishment. For it is an inspired saying of the ancients that the soul pays penalties (διδόναι τὴν ψυχὴν τιμωρίαν) and that we live for the punishment of great sins. For indeed the conjunction of the soul with the body looks very much like this.

How much better and nearer the truth than yours were the views about the generation of men held by those whom Cicero, as though led and compelled by the very evidence of the facts, commemorates in the last part of the dialogue *Hortensius*! After mentioning the many facts we see and lament with regard to the vanity and the unhappiness of men, he says: “From which errors and cares of human life it results that sometimes those ancients—whether they were prophets or interpreters of the divine mind by the transmission of sacred rites—who said that we are born to expiate sins committed in a former life, seem to have had a glimpse of the truth, and that that is true which Aristotle says, that *we are punished*

<sup>248</sup> For a history of the reconstruction of the text, see Chroust 1973, 2:86–104, 332–45, and Hutchinson and Johnson 2005, 196–201.

<sup>249</sup> See Hutchinson and Johnson 2005, 255–8.

For as the Etruscans are said often to torture captives by chaining (προσδεσμεύοντες) dead bodies face to face with the living, fitting part to part, so the soul seems to be extended throughout and affixed (προσκεκολλησθαι) to all the sensitive members of the body.

much as those were who once upon a time, when they had fallen into the hands of Etruscan robbers, were killed with studied cruelty; their bodies, the living with the dead, were bound as exactly as possible one against another: so our minds, bound together with our bodies, are like the living joined with the dead.”

It is noteworthy that this Aristotelian fragment has numerous parallels with Plato: first, the saying about the soul paying penalties alludes to the Orphic beliefs reported in *Crat.* 400c;<sup>250</sup> second, the verb προσκολλάω comes from *Phaed.* 82e; finally, the living are chained to the dead in a similar way that we are enchained (δεδεσμευμένοι) according to *Phaedr.* 250c. Moreover, as Ingemar Düring pointed out, the entire final section of *Protrepticus* (fr. B 104–10 Düring) is “inspired” by *Phaed.* 64a–70b.<sup>251</sup> It is quite possible that Aristotle authored the notion that bodies are corpses, and it seems that his intention was to offer a vivid way to express a sentiment that was already well-known from Plato’s dialogues.

Eventually, Aristotle’s idea that bodies are corpses became quite popular among Platonists and Platonizing authors. It seems to occur most often in the works of Philo.<sup>252</sup> The most remarkable text is Philo’s *Legum allegoriae*. According to *Leg.* 3.69–72, the body “is evil and plots against the soul (πονηρόν τε καὶ ἐπίβουλον τῆς ψυχῆς)”; it is “eternally lifeless and dead (νεκρόν καὶ τεθνηκὸς αἰεὶ).” Philo urges the reader to realize that “everyone is nothing but a corpse-bearer (μὴ γὰρ ἄλλο τι ἕκαστον ἡμῶν ποιεῖν ἢ νεκροφορεῖν).” To become a philosopher means to understand that and act accordingly; in this regard, philosophers are the opposite of athletes:

On this account there is a difference between the soul of an athlete and the soul of a philosopher. For the athlete refers everything to the well-being of the body, and, lover of the body that he is, would sacrifice the soul itself on its behalf; but the philosopher being enamoured of the noble thing that lives in himself, cares for the soul, and pays no regard to that which is really a corpse, the body, concerned only that the best part of him, his soul, may not be hurt by an evil thing, a very corpse, tied to it (trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker).

Elsewhere in the same treatise (*Leg.* 1.108), Philo not only repeats that living bodies are corpses, but also combines this metaphor with the σῶμα-σῆμα formula:

Heraclitus, who on this point followed Moses’ teaching, phrased it well. “We live,” he says, “their death, and are dead to their life” (fr. 47d<sup>1</sup> Marcovich).<sup>253</sup> He means that now, when we are living, the soul is dead and has been entombed in the body as in a sepulchre (τεθνηκυίας τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ ὡς ἂν ἐν σήματι τῷ σώματι ἐντετυμβευμένης); whereas, should we die, the soul lives

<sup>250</sup> Noted already by Bywater 1869, 61.

<sup>251</sup> Düring 1961, 261–2.

<sup>252</sup> See, for instance, *Gig.* 15; *Somn.* 2.237; *Migr.* 21; *Agr.* 25; *Her.* 58.

<sup>253</sup> This is yet another later reformulation of the famous saying of Heraclitus (fr. 47a Marcovich; see above).

forthwith its own proper life, and is released from the body, the baneful corpse to which it was tied (trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered).

Another Platonizing<sup>254</sup> text that combines the two metaphors is treatise 7 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*. According to this graphic diatribe against bodily pleasures, the human body is “the portable tomb” (ὁ περιφόρητος τάφος) and “the sentient corpse” (ὁ αἰσθητικὸς<sup>255</sup> νεκρός) (Corp. Herm. 7.2). Although logically the idea that bodies are tombs, on the one hand, and the idea that, on the other, bodies are also corpses seem to contradict each other (in the first case, the soul is dead; in the second, it is alive), it is clear that Philo and the anonymous Hermetic writer considered both notions to be variants of the same idea, viz. that “to be confined in a body is a grim business for the soul and prevents it from enjoying its true life.”<sup>256</sup>

The other texts that bear witness to the popularity of the idea the bodies are corpses in the Platonist circles are the letters of Pseudo-Heraclitus, Celsus’ polemical treatise preserved in Origen’s *Contra Celsum*, an epitome of the Arabic translation of Galen’s *De moribus*,<sup>257</sup> and Numenius’ lost work *De bono*. At the end of his letter, Pseudo-Heraclitus writes,

Perhaps my soul is already prophesying its release from this prison (ἐκ τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου τούτου), and, while the body quiver, peers out and remembers the homeland from which it has descended and wrapped around itself a body in a perpetual state of flux and change, a body dead, though appearing to others to be alive, with phlegms, bile, juices and blood, made solid by sinews, bones and flesh (Pseudo-Heraclitus, *Ep.* 5.3; trans. D.R. Worley, altered).

Although the letters ascribed to Heraclitus “reflect attitudes and traditions most closely associated with Cynicism,”<sup>258</sup> it is evident that letters 5 and 6 “are marked by a series of commonplace Platonic notions about death as an escape of the soul from its bodily prison.”<sup>259</sup> The fact that the word *δεσμωτήριον* (cf. Plato, *Crat.* 400c) is employed in the cited passage is especially telling in this regard.

As for Celsus, one of his favorite ways of attacking Christianity is to ridicule the belief in bodily resurrection. God created the soul, but not the body (Origen, *Cels.* 4.52). Dead bodies are, according to the Heraclitean saying (fr. 76c Marcovich = fr. 22 B 96 Diels-Kranz), “worse than dung”;<sup>260</sup> God would never bring them back to life, because this would be contrary to reason (5.14). Christians are thus a “body-loving race (φιλοσώματων γένος)” (7.36); they “are completely bound to the flesh (τῇ σαρκὶ ἐνδεδεμένοι; cf. *Phaed.* 82e) and see nothing pure” (7.42; cf. 8.49). In other words, they “live for the body which is a dead thing” (7.45; trans. H. Chadwick).

According to the epitome of the second book of the Galenic treatise *De moribus*, only the rational soul, *al-naḥs al-nāṭiqah*, is the true human being; thus, assimilation to the divine means

<sup>254</sup> “The dark enclosure,” ὁ σκοτεινὸς περίβολος, in Corp. Herm. 7.2, is clearly an allusion to *Crat.* 400c.

<sup>255</sup> The reading *αἰσθητικός* is attested only by A<sup>2</sup> (= *manus secunda* of Codex Laurentianus 71.33), but still seems to be preferable to the *αἰσθητός* of the majority of manuscripts. Cf. Nock and Festugière 1945–1954, 1:81.

<sup>256</sup> Guthrie 1962–1981, 1:331. Guthrie’s remark is a reply to the discussion of the authenticity of 44 B 14 Diels-Kranz (cited above) in Bywater 1868, 49.

<sup>257</sup> For a detailed discussion of this source, see chapter 10.

<sup>258</sup> Attridge 1976, 3.

<sup>259</sup> Attridge 1976, 8.

<sup>260</sup> According to Marcovich 2001, 410, the saying was originally “a criticism of the traditional funerary practices”; cf. Kahn 1979, 212–3.

release from the body and from the lower parts of the soul.<sup>261</sup> In this life, we should seek to become as divine as possible. Galen argues that, while it is only a god who can live without eating and drinking, we can become almost divine, if we restrict ourselves “to what is absolutely necessary for the life of the body” (trans. J. N. Mattock). Then, he tells us a beautiful fable that deserves to be quoted in full:

You have a choice between honouring your soul by making it like the angels (*al-malā'ikah*)<sup>262</sup> and treating it contemptuously by making it like the brute beasts. It is said that two men simultaneously went to a seller of idols and bargained with him for the same idol representing Hermes. One of them intended to set it up in a temple, in honour of Hermes, and the other intended to erect it over a tomb, in remembrance of a dead man. They could not come to an agreement about buying it that day and so they postponed the business until the next. The seller of idols dreamt that night that the idol said to him: “O excellent man, I am now something that you have made. I have taken on a likeness that is attributed to a star, and I am now no longer called ‘a stone’ as I used to be, but I am called ‘Hermes.’ You must choose now whether to make me a memorial to something that does not decay or to something that has already decayed.” This is what I say to those who seek to investigate their own souls; their decision, however, is greater than in the case of an idol, since no-one else has any jurisdiction over them, for they are free and masters of their will. It is right that someone who is in this situation should place his soul in the highest rank of honour; there is no honour greater than that of imitating God, so far as is possible for a human being. This is achieved by despising worldly pleasures and preferring the Beautiful (trans. J. N. Mattock).

It is worth noting that, as Richard Walzer pointed out,<sup>263</sup> Galen was not the author of this fable, since it is also narrated by Babrius:

A sculptor was trying to sell a marble statue of Hermes which he had just carved and two men were thinking of buying it. One of them wanted it for a gravestone, since his son had recently died, and the other, an artisan, intended to set it up as an image of the god himself. It was late in the day and the sculptor had not yet sold his statue, having agreed to show it to the buyers again when they came in the morning. In his sleep that night the sculptor saw Hermes himself at the gate of dreams, saying: “So, then, my fate is being weighed in your balances: it remains to be seen whether you will make me a corpse or a god” (Babrius, *Myth. Aesop.* 30; trans. B. E. Perry).

The last line of the Babrian fable is, in fact, a nice summary for Galen’s line of thought in the second book of *De moribus*: everyone has to choose between two alternatives, to become “either a corpse or a god,” ἢ νεκρὸν ἢ θεόν. While Galen does not explicitly claim that our bodies are corpses, this is the conclusion that the reader would most certainly draw from the analogy between honoring the body

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<sup>261</sup> See chapter 10 for further discussion.

<sup>262</sup> The Arabic word *al-malā'ikah* (“the angels”) renders θεοί (“gods”) in the Greek original; see the discussion in chapter 10.

<sup>263</sup> See Walzer 1962, 165.

and making a memorial to “something that has already decayed.” It seems likely, therefore, that, according to Galen, by disregarding our souls, we indulge our bodies, which are nothing but corpses.

Thus, the fable that Galen relates at the end of the second book of *De moribus* alludes to the Platonist idea that human bodies are corpses; the choice that the reader must make is essentially between becoming a god and becoming a corpse. When Galen claims that his reader faces the same dilemma as the fable’s sculptor, he implies that we either seek to become like gods by looking after our rational souls or identify ourselves with our bodies and in so doing willingly turn ourselves into corpses.

Finally, according to Numenius, matter, either by itself or as bodies, is not τὸ ὄν, “that which is.” With respect to the latter option, matter as bodies, he points out that bodies can hardly be “that which is,” for they always require something to hold them together (τὸ καθέξον or τὸ κατασχῆσον). Such a cohesive principle is necessary, since bodies are by nature “inanimate and dead, carried hither and thither, and not abiding in one stay (τεθνηκότα καὶ νεκρὰ καὶ πεφορημένα καὶ οὐδ’ ἐν ταύτῳ μένοντα)” (fr. 4a des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.17.6; trans. E. H. Gifford).<sup>264</sup>

These abundant examples from the Platonist and Platonizing sources demonstrate that *Thomas* 56 and 80 should be interpreted against a Platonist background. In addition, one more detail seems to demonstrate the extent to which *Thomas* is indebted to the Platonist tradition. While the sources that identify bodies with corpses are quite numerous, none of them employs the word πτώμα. In fact, there are relatively few Greek texts where the word πτώμα is used in the same way it is used in *Thomas* 56 and 60, i.e. meaning “corpse” (the primary meaning of the word is “fall,” “act of falling”) and without a modifier in genitive, as in τὸ πτώμα τοῦ λέοντος in Judg 14:8 (see above, section 5.1). It seems that the rare word is used in order to provide the reader with a memorable paronomastic slogan. As was pointed out above, the two notions, viz. bodies are tombs and bodies are corpses, were sometimes considered resonant with and complementary to each other. It is, therefore, possible that sayings 56 and 80 bear witness to an attempt to give the second metaphor the catchy formula (σῶμα-πτώμα) that the first metaphor had (σῶμα-σῆμα). The σῶμα-πτώμα formula does not seem to be attested elsewhere, so it is impossible to ascertain whether the author of sayings 56 and 80 coined it himself or borrowed it from elsewhere. In any case, *Thomas* seems to bear witness to how negative attitudes towards the body evolved along Platonist lines.<sup>265</sup> So much for the background of and parallels to *Thomas* 56 and 80.

The differences between the two sayings are perhaps of even more significance. Indeed, no ancient source except *Thomas* argues that the world is a corpse. It is especially remarkable that no Platonist ever expressed a thought that the world, in so far as it is a body, is a corpse. Even though one can easily use the reasoning behind *Thomas* 56 and 80 to construct a syllogism (all bodies are corpses; the world is a body; therefore, the world is a corpse) and even though Platonists would have accepted both premises, they would still have rejected the conclusion.

To my knowledge, Cicero was the only ancient author who made a similar argument and came quite close to saying that the world is a dead thing. In his famous *Somnium Scipionis* (= *Rep.* 6.9–29), he argues that we are not our bodies, but our minds, and as long as we are minds, we are gods:

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<sup>264</sup> It is worth noting that, whereas the previous examples dealt specifically with human bodies, this passage indicates that, in fact, all corporeal objects are by nature dead.

<sup>265</sup> Apparently, there was also an attempt to coin a pun for the idea that bodies are prisons. See Excursus III.



Know, then, that you are a god, if a god is that which lives, feels, remembers, and foresees, and which rules, governs, and moves the body over which it is set, just as the supreme God above us rules this universe. And just as the eternal God moves the universe, which is partly mortal (ex quadam parte mortalis), so an immortal spirit moves the frail body (Cicero, *Rep.* 6.26; trans. C.W. Keyes).

In this passage, Cicero compares the human mind (“mens”) to God and human body to the world. Yet he does not apply to the world the unflattering remarks he usually makes with regard to human bodies. Although he often calls the human body a prison and says that our life (i.e. bodily existence) is in fact death (thus alluding to the σῶμα-σῆμα formula),<sup>266</sup> something prevents him from speaking ill of the world (which is also a body). He says that the world is “ex quadam parte mortalis,”<sup>267</sup> but his reverence for the world does not allow him to say that it is “mortuus.”<sup>268</sup>

So far, I have discussed the meaning and background of *Thomas* 56 and 80. The Thomasine views on the world as a body are, in a sense, both Platonist and anti-Platonist. On the one hand, *Thomas* draws the notions that the world is a body and that bodies are corpses from the fount of Platonist wisdom. On the other hand, *Thomas* insists that the contempt for the body must apply to the world as well, thus expressing a negative attitude towards the world that is incompatible not only with Platonism, but, in fact, with any Greco-Roman school of thought.

It might seem logical to conclude that, by emphasizing the worthlessness of the world, sayings 56 and 80 imply that one should seek ultimate reality outside of the physical universe. This is not the case, however, for, according to *Thomas*, it is in this world that we may find the kingdom of the Father. This paradox is important for the understanding of sayings 56 and 80 in the context of *Thomas*, so I would like to discuss it in further detail.

#### 5.4. What is Alive is Hidden in What is Dead

According to *Thomas*, the salvific substance is somehow present in the world, but it is by no means a part of the world. It is concealed inscrutably in the world, so that only a few can see through the mundane and find salvation.<sup>269</sup> Saying 113 seems to be the most illuminating saying in this regard. When the disciples ask Jesus about the coming of the kingdom, Jesus says that τῆντέρο ἡπαιώτ ἐσπορώ εἶναι διὰ τὸ πᾶσι ἀγνοεῖν καὶ εἶναι ἐν κόσμῳ, “the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth, and people do not see it.”<sup>270</sup> I believe that the following saying about splitting wood and lifting stones (*Thomas* 30:3–4/77:2–3) is also relevant for this discussion:

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<sup>266</sup> See, e.g., *Scaur.* 4; *Tusc.* 1.75; *Rep.* 6.14.

<sup>267</sup> In saying so, Cicero probably alludes to the Stoic doctrine of ἐκπύρωσις (see *SVF* 2.585–632).

<sup>268</sup> Admittedly, Cicero never says that bodies are corpses. It is tempting, however, to think that it is in order to avoid speaking ill of the world that he does so.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. Liebenberg 2001, 241 and 488–9.

<sup>270</sup> The saying is also attested in Pseudo-Macarius, *Serm.* (collectio B) 35.5: ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ χαμαὶ ἡπλῶται καὶ οἱ ἄνθρωποι οὐκ ἐμβλέπουσιν αὐτήν; this parallel was first discovered in Quispel 1964, 226.

30:1 [λέγ]ει [Ι(ησοῦ)ς· ὅπ]ου ἐὰν ὧσιν [τρ]ε[ῖς],  
ε[ἰσὶ]ν ἄθροισ·

30:2 καὶ [ὁ]που ε[ἷς] ἐστὶν μόνος, [λ]έγω· ἐγὼ  
εἰμι μετ' αὐτ[οῦ].

30:3 ἔγει[ρ]ον τὸν λίθον<sup>271</sup> καὶ εὐρήσεις με·

30:4 σχίσον τὸ ξύλον καὶ ἐκεῖ εἰμι

30:1 [Jesus said], “Where there are [three], they  
are without God,

30:2 and where there is but [a single one], I say  
that I am with [him].

30:3 *Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.*

30:4 *Split the piece of wood, and I am there.”*

30:1 πεχε ιϥ χε πμα εγῆ φοντ ἡνογτε ἡμαγ  
εἡνογτε νε

30:2 πμα εγῆ σναγ η ογα ανοκ †φωοπ ημαγ

77:1 πεχε ιϥ χε ανοκ πε πογοειν παει ετρηιδωγ  
τηρογ ανοκ πε πτηρη ἡτα πτηρη ει εβολ ἡρητ  
αγω ἡτα πτηρη παω φαροει

77:2 παω ἡνογωε ανοκ †ἡμαγ

77:3 qi ἡπωνε ερραῖ αγω τετηαρε εροει ἡμαγ

30:1 Jesus said, “Where there are three gods, they  
are gods.

30:2 Where there are two or one, I am with him.”

77:1 Jesus said, “It is I who am the light which is  
above them all. It is I who am the all. From me  
did the all come forth, and unto me did the all  
extend.

77:2 *Split a piece of wood, and I am there.*

77:3 *Lift the stone, and you will find me there.”*<sup>272</sup>

The comparison of the Greek and Coptic versions raises two questions related to the original text of the stone/wood saying. First, where did this saying initially belong (saying 30 or saying 77)? Second, which of the two versions (*Thomas* 30:3–4 or *Thomas* 77:2–3) is original? Let me start with the first question. One could perhaps argue that the premise of this question is false, since the stone/wood saying could have initially accompanied both *Thomas* 30:1–2 and *Thomas* 77:1. Repetitive formulas are one of the most recurrent literary devices in *Thomas*, and it is possible that one such formula was the stone/wood saying. This option, however, appears to be unlikely, since the stone/wood saying does not accompany *Thomas* 30:1–2 in the Coptic version. It is hard to imagine why one would omit the saying in one place, while retaining it in the other. It seems more reasonable

<sup>271</sup> According to Reitzenstein 1905 (see also his review of Evelyn White 1920 in *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* 183 [1921] 167–8), this phrase, ἔγειρον τὸν λίθον, is quoted in Etym. Gud. 393.22 de Stefani.

<sup>272</sup> I have chosen Thomas O. Lambdin's translation over that of the Berliner Arbeitskreis, since the former translation appears to be more faithful to the Coptic text.

to surmise that the stone/wood saying initially accompanied one of the Thomasine sayings, but was later relocated.

The Coptic text of saying 77 has a pun: *πῶς* in *Thomas* 77:1 means “to reach,”<sup>273</sup> while *πῶς* in *Thomas* 77:2 means “to break.”<sup>274</sup> This fact is often used as a reason to give preference to the Greek version.<sup>275</sup> This argument is hardly compelling: although the word play in the Coptic version is clearly secondary, it does not necessarily mean that “the parts were joined during the transmission process only after the text was translated into Coptic.”<sup>276</sup> It is hypothetically possible that, already in the Greek text the Coptic translator had at his disposal, *Thomas* 77:2–3 followed *Thomas* 77:1, and that this translator simply wanted to give the saying a more refined form and thus decided to render the Greek verbs he found in *Thomas* 77:1 and *Thomas* 77:2 with a pair of Coptic homonyms.

That the presence of the Coptic pun does not necessarily imply that the original text was rearranged after it was translated into Coptic is clear from *Thomas* 33:1–2, where we encounter another pair of homonyms: in *Thomas* 33:1 *μααχε* means “ear,”<sup>277</sup> whereas in *Thomas* 33:2 *μααχε* means “measure.”<sup>278</sup> While P. Oxy. 1 preserves only the beginning of *Thomas* 33:1 (and thus we cannot know whether or not it was followed by *Thomas* 33:2), *Thomas* 33:1–2 appears to be preserved in the report on the teaching of the Naassenes in Pseudo-Origen, *Ref. 5.7.28*.<sup>279</sup> Hence, as Simon Gathercole points out, it is evident that *Thomas* 33:1 and *Thomas* 33:2 were juxtaposed already at the Greek stage.<sup>280</sup> While the Coptic translator of *Thomas* 33:1–2 may have intentionally decided to translate two Greek nouns (most probably *ὠτίον* and *μῶδιος*) with the pair of homonyms *μααχε* (“ear”) and *μααχε* (“measure”),<sup>281</sup> he did not rearrange the text of the saying.<sup>282</sup>

The presence of the Coptic pun does not *ipso facto* prove that the Coptic version is secondary. There is, however, another reason to prefer the Greek version. Unlike the Coptic text, the Greek text is formally structured: the two “where”-sentences of the first part (*Thomas* 30:1–2) correspond to the two “there”-sentences of the second part (*Thomas* 30:3–4).<sup>283</sup> Since chiasmic and parallel structures are each among the most frequently-used literary devices in *Thomas*, it follows that P. Oxy. 1 most likely preserves the original arrangement of the text (*Thomas* 30:1–2 → *Thomas* 30:3–4).

It is now time to address the question of the original form of the stone/wood saying. The two versions of the saying differ from each other in two respects. First, whereas the Greek version addresses one person (*ἐγχείρον ... εὐρήσεις ... σχίσον ...*), the Coptic text addresses a group (*τετναχε*). Second, the order of the two strophes is reversed: in the Greek version, the lifting of the *stone* precedes

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<sup>273</sup> See Crum 1939, 281a–282a.

<sup>274</sup> See Crum 1939, 280a–281a.

<sup>275</sup> See, e.g. Kuhn 1960, 317–8; Montefiore and Turner 1962, 81; Leipoldt 1967, 70; Neller 1989–1990, 6.

<sup>276</sup> Plisch 2008, 182.

<sup>277</sup> See Crum 1939, 212b–213a.

<sup>278</sup> See Crum 1939, 213a.

<sup>279</sup> As Johnson 2010, 316, points out, this passage must refer to saying 33, since it is only in *Thomas* that the Lampstand and Rooftops sayings are contiguous.

<sup>280</sup> See Gathercole 2014b, 271–3.

<sup>281</sup> In the Sahidic New Testament, Greek *μῶδιος* is rendered as *ῥι*, “measure” (see Wilmet 1957–1959, 3:1182–3). It is possible that the Coptic translator decided to use *μααχε* instead of *ῥι* in order to preserve the phonetic similarities with *ὠτίον* and *μῶδιος*.

<sup>282</sup> Pace Patterson 1993, 32; Patterson 2015, 241.

<sup>283</sup> Cf. Evelyn White 1920, 38: “the balancing of *ῥπου ... ῥπου* in the first part against *ἐκεῖ ... ἐκεῖ* in the second is surely not fortuitous.”

the splitting of the *wood*, whereas, in the Coptic, the splitting of the *wood* precedes the lifting of the *stone*.<sup>284</sup> In both cases, the Coptic version appears to be secondary for the following reasons.

First, according to *Thomas* 30:1–2, Jesus will be with the one who is solitary; *Thomas* 30:3–4 is clearly an address to this solitary person, which is expressed by the verbs in the singular. Since, as we have already established, the stone/wood saying initially belonged to *Thomas* 30:1–2, and since the singular form of the verbs in *Thomas* 30:3–4 correspond to the praise of solitude in *Thomas* 30:1–2, there can be no doubt that the phrasing of *Thomas* 30:3–4 is original. As for the second-person plural in *Thomas* 77:2–3, it should be noted that the second-person plural also occurs in sayings 76 and 78; it is likely, therefore, that this change “is due to assimilation to the context.”<sup>285</sup>

Second, the text of *Thomas* 77:2–3 also appears to be secondary with respect to the order of the two strophes. To return to the discussion of homonyms in saying 77, while the fact that there is a pair of homonyms in the Coptic text does not prove that the stone/wood saying initially belonged to *Thomas* 30:1–2, it might become relevant once we have established that *Thomas* 30:1–2 was in fact the original context of the saying. I find it difficult to agree with Miroslav Marcovich that the vicinity of the homonyms in *Thomas* 77:1–2 is “a pure coincidence,”<sup>286</sup> since in fact *Thomas* 77:1 and *Thomas* 77:2 are linked by not one, but two catchwords: *πῶς* (“to reach”/“to break”) and *ἄνοκ* (“I”). The following scenario seems to offer the most plausible explanation of this catchword connection. Initially the stone/wood saying belonged to a parallel structure (*ῥπου ... ῥπου ... ἐκεῖ ... ἐκεῖ ...*), but it was no longer the case once it was relocated. The person responsible for this rearrangement needed to link the stone/wood saying with its new context, *Thomas* 77:1, and thus changed the order of the strophes so that the catchword connection would become more evident.

The pair of catchwords, *πῶς* (“to reach”) and *πῶς* (“to break”), could have been used only at the Coptic stage of the transmission of the text. It follows that it was either the Coptic translator or a later copyist/editor who moved the stone/wood saying from its original place (*Thomas* 30:3–4) to the place it occupies in NHC II (*Thomas* 77:2–3), reversed the order of the strophes to accentuate the catchword connection, and finally changed the second-person singular to the second-person plural to assimilate the saying to its context.<sup>287</sup>

So far, we have established that the stone/wood saying was originally preceded by *Thomas* 30:1–2 and that P.Oxy. 1 preserves the original wording of the stone/wood saying. As I have already mentioned in chapter 1, the Coptic text of *Thomas* 30:1–2 is extremely problematic. It is tempting to accept the suggestion made by Harold W. Attridge, viz. that the cryptic remark about gods being gods in the Coptic text is due to an attempt made by the Coptic translator to make sense of a Greek text

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<sup>284</sup> According to Jeremias 1964, 108, there is one more disagreement between the two versions: while the Greek text reads τὸ ξύλον, “the piece of wood,” the Coptic text reads οὐγκ, “a piece of wood,” which means that its Greek *Vorlage* omitted the article. It is worth noting, however, that the same phenomenon is attested in the Sahidic version of Acts 16:24, where τὸ ξύλον is rendered with οὐγκ. It does not seem to be necessary to postulate that the Greek *Vorlage* of *Thomas* 77:2 and that of the Sahidic version of Acts 16:24 omitted the article. It is more likely that both cases merely illustrate the difference between Greek and Coptic idiom.

<sup>285</sup> Jeremias 1964, 108.

<sup>286</sup> Marcovich 1988, 73.

<sup>287</sup> It seems impossible to ascertain who is responsible for this rearrangement, the Coptic translator or the Coptic copyist/editor. It is possible that the translator faithfully translated the original text of *Thomas*, then later on the copyist/editor noticed the potential catchword connection between *Thomas* 30:3–4 and *Thomas* 77:1 (see Excursus IV, where I argue that it was probably part of the original text) and decided to bring them together. It is also possible that it was the translator who rearranged the sayings; in this case, we can hypothesize that he intentionally translated the Greek text in such a way that *Thomas* 77:1 and *Thomas* 77:2–3 would be linked by not one, but two catchwords.

that had already suffered textual corruption (according to him, the privative alpha in ἄθεοι was accidentally lost at some point during textual transmission).<sup>288</sup> Moreover, as I have already pointed out, Eisele is probably right that the reading εἷς μόνος (“only one”) of the Greek version of *Thomas* 30:2 is original, while ⲙⲁⲗ ⲛ ⲟⲩⲁ (“two or one”) of the Coptic version is a later attempt to harmonize the saying with Matt 18:20.<sup>289</sup> It seems clear, therefore, that P.Oxy. 1 preserves not only the original sequence (*Thomas* 30:1–2 → *Thomas* 30:3–4) but also the original text of *Thomas* 30:1–2 and *Thomas* 30:3–4.

Let us, therefore, proceed to the interpretation of the Greek text of saying 30. Attridge, who examined P.Oxy. 1 with the use of ultraviolet light and to whom we are indebted for the standard restoration of the Greek text of *Thomas* 30:1–2, points out that this passage should be read in connection with the sayings that speak of being or becoming μοναχός.<sup>290</sup> According to him, “the fragment asserts that any *group* of people lacks divine presence.”<sup>291</sup> As Stephen J. Patterson puts it, it is only “in the singleness of an individual,” and not in an organized community, that the presence of Jesus is guaranteed.<sup>292</sup>

In *Thomas* 30:3–4, Jesus explains how his presence is made available for this solitary individual: “Lift up the stone, and you will find me there. Split the piece of wood, and I am there.” Scholars have proposed different interpretations for these two verses. One of the more popular interpretations was offered already in 1897, the same year when P.Oxy. 1 was discovered, by Adolf Harnack and H. B. Swete. According to them, the stone/wood saying is quite similar to Eccl 10:9, “Whoever quarries stones will be hurt by them; and whoever splits logs will be endangered by them” (NRSV). As Harnack put it, “Our text cannot be without some connexion with this passage, and clearly it is an intentional antithesis to it.”<sup>293</sup> Read against this background, the saying seems to argue that “Jesus can be encountered in everyday life of the world, even when at work; whoever wants to find him does not need special practices of piety.”<sup>294</sup> Wilfried Eisele has recently offered a similar interpretation; according to him, regardless of the place and form of the stone/wood saying, its fundamental message remains the same both in *Thomas* 30 and in *Thomas* 77—it preaches “eine Mystik des Alltags”:

Entscheidend ist dann nicht, *wo* und *wie* genau man sich die Präsenz Jesu vorzustellen hätte, sondern *dass* er ⲙⲁⲗ, das heißt ganz allgemein bei so weltlichen Beschäftigungen wie Holzspalten und Steineaufheben, gegenwärtig ist.<sup>295</sup>

<sup>288</sup> See Attridge 1979, 156–7.

<sup>289</sup> It is also worth noting that the Coptic text does not have a parallel for the Greek λέγω; perhaps the omission of λέγω should also be seen as a later harmonization of *Thomas* 30:2 to Matt 18:20 (I owe this suggestion to Timo Tekoniemi). The other explanations appear to be less satisfactory. According to Plisch 2008, 99, it is possible that a scribe copied from a damaged manuscript where λέγω was illegible; the scribe then recalled Matt 18:20 and conjectured that the text in the lacuna was ἡ δύο. This hypothesis is problematic, since in that case the Coptic version of *Thomas* 30:2 would have read ⲟⲩⲁ ⲛ ⲙⲁⲗ (“one or two”), not ⲙⲁⲗ ⲛ ⲟⲩⲁ (“two or one”). According to Marcovich 1988, 71, λέγω was accidentally omitted because of a homoeoteleuton with ἐγώ. This hypothesis is also problematic, since in this case the scribe would have omitted ἐγώ, not λέγω.

<sup>290</sup> I discuss these sayings in chapter 7.

<sup>291</sup> Attridge 1979, 156, emphasis his.

<sup>292</sup> Patterson 1993, 153.

<sup>293</sup> Harnack 1897, 336; cf. Swete 1897, 548.

<sup>294</sup> Plisch 2008, 183; cf. Jeremias 1964, 110–1.

<sup>295</sup> Eisele 2010, 169.

This interpretation of the stone/wood saying is problematic for several reasons. First, Harnack's suggestion that *Thomas* 30:3–4 alludes to Eccl 10:9 is open to criticism. The Greek text of Eccl 10:9 features a person who *removes* stones (ἐξαίρων λίθους), rather than a person who *lifts* them; it additionally differs from *Thomas* both in the aspect (present vs. aorist) of the verbs and in the number of the nouns. More importantly, the combination of “stones” and “logs” is so typical for ancient literature (see below) that it is absolutely unnecessary to conclude that *Thomas* 30:3–4 is somehow dependent on Eccl 10:9. Second, as insightful as it is, the suggestion that “there” (ἐκεῖ/ἐνταῦθα) in the stone/wood saying refers to physical labor (which means that Jesus is saying, “I am there with you when you lift stones and split logs”) is far-fetched. As Walter Lock pointed out, had the author of the saying wanted to refer to the act of raising and splitting, he would have used οὕτως rather than ἐκεῖ.<sup>296</sup>

It is more natural to interpret *Thomas* 30:3–4 to the effect that Jesus is present under the stone and within the log. How should we understand this statement? It certainly should not be understood in the pantheist sense. The identification of Jesus with the world would go against the most unflattering claims about the world that Jesus makes in *Thomas* 56 and 80. Moreover, the pantheist interpretation would do injustice to the text of *Thomas* 30:3–4, since Jesus does not seem to say that he is the stone and the log; rather, he is under the stone and within the log. In other words, he is not *everything*, but rather *everywhere*; he is omnipresent.<sup>297</sup>

There is, however, one possible objection to this interpretation of *Thomas* 30:3–4. As Philip H. Sellew has pointed out, the two examples that Jesus chose to describe his omnipresence “are rather odd and even a little disgusting.” Sellew asks, “what squalor and insects do we usually find when we lift a rock or split open a log?” Although this question contains a bit of rhetorical exaggeration (quite often there is no squalor underneath a rock and no insects in a log), this choice of examples most certainly requires an explanation. In fact, an important detail has been overlooked in the discussion of the stone/wood saying.

As Gustav Adolf Gerhard once pointed out, the expression λίθοι καὶ ξύλα “fungieren typisch als verächtlichen Ausdruck für leblose Baustoffe im Gegensatz zum Menschen und seinem Geist.”<sup>298</sup> This expression occurs in numerous ancient sources, including the Old Testament (Jer 3:9).<sup>299</sup> The saying ascribed by Plutarch to the Spartan king Agesilaus II is especially remarkable. When asked why Sparta did not have the city walls, Agesilaus answered, “Cities ought not to be fortified with stones and timbers, but with the strong virtues of their inhabitants” (Plutarch, *Apoph. lac.* 210e; trans. F.C. Babbitt). The point of Agesilaus' saying is that lifeless stone and wood cannot protect the city, but the citizens' spirit can.

Given that stone and wood were the conventional examples of lifelessness in the ancient world, it is quite likely that the author of saying 30 had an intention to play on this motif. The saying, therefore, claims that Jesus (whom *Thomas* calls the “living” Jesus) can be paradoxically met even among lifeless, material objects. In this regard, the stone/wood saying is a reformulation of the idea expressed in sayings 56 and 113. According to sayings 56 and 113, we can find the kingdom that is

<sup>296</sup> See Lock and Sanday 1897, 24.

<sup>297</sup> Cf. Davies 1992, 664; Pagels 1999, 484.

<sup>298</sup> Gerhard 1909, 139–40.

<sup>299</sup> See the references in Gerhard 1909, 140.

secretly present in the world, even though the world is a dead body; according to saying 30, we can find Jesus under stones and within logs, even though stones and logs exemplify lifelessness.

### 5.5. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the Thomasine understanding of the world. My focus has been on sayings 56 and 80. As I have demonstrated, these two sayings do not simply repeat each other, but rather direct the reader towards two different aspects of the same complex problem. While saying 80 refers to the well-known Platonist notion that the world is a body, saying 56 alludes to the Platonist notion that bodies are corpses. What is remarkable about *Thomas* is that it uses these two Platonist premises to express its non-Platonist and, perhaps, even anti-Platonist contempt for the world. It is not enough, therefore, to say that *Thomas* was indebted to the Platonist tradition; rather, it was engaged in a dialogue with Platonism, accepting some ideas, while repudiating others.

In order to place the world-rejecting message of sayings 56 and 80 in the broader Thomasine context, I have offered a reflection on the stone/wood saying (*Thomas* 30:3–4/77:2–3). According to this peculiar saying, we can encounter Jesus within logs and under stones. Stones and logs were the conventional examples of lifelessness in the ancient world, so the stone/wood saying describes a paradox: even lifeless objects are not devoid of the living Jesus. Similarly, the world is not only a corpse, i.e. a lifeless and soulless object, essentially equivalent to lifeless stones and logs, but also a place where a perceptive individual can discover Jesus and the kingdom (*Thomas* 113). These observations on the peculiar interplay between cosmology and soteriology in *Thomas* make it possible to discern a key difference between the Platonist and Thomasine views on the world: while Plato maintained that the world was a “perceptible god” (*Tim.* 92c), *Thomas* holds that it is the opposite of the divine, yet somehow infiltrated by it.

### Excursus III. The δέμας-δεσμός Formula

In chapter 5, I have discussed three notions that were often employed in the Platonist tradition to express a negative attitude towards the body: bodies are tombs; bodies are corpses; bodies are prisons. The first of these notions is summarized in the famous σῶμα-σῆμα formula. The second notion, as I have suggested, is reflected in the σῶμα-πτῶμα formula, attested in *Thomas* 56 and 80. It is worth noting that eventually the third notion also received a catchy formula: δέμας-δεσμός.

Plutarch appears to be the earliest witness to an etymology that connects δέμας, “body,” with δέω, “to bind.” According to him (fr. 6 Bernardakis = fr. 177 Sandbach = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 4.52.48), the body is called δέμας because “the soul is unnaturally kept in bondage in it (δεδεμένης ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐνταῦθα παρὰ φύσιν).” Later on, this etymology took the form of the δέμας-δεσμός formula. This formula is attested in a passage from a sixth-century introduction to philosophy sometimes attributed to a certain David<sup>300</sup> and in a parallel passage from the commentary on Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis* by the fifth-century Platonist Macrobius:

David, *Proleg. philos.* 31.7–13 Busse  
(cf. Pseudo-Elias, *Comm. Isag.* 12.8)

Macrobius, *Comm. Somn. Scip.* 1.11.3

ἰστέον ὅτι ἡ ζωὴ ἀντίκειται τῷ θανάτῳ· ἡ μὲν γὰρ  
ζωὴ ἕξις ἐστὶ καὶ αἰτία τοῦ εἶναι ἡμᾶς, ὁ δὲ  
θάνατος στέρησις. καὶ τούτων ἐκάτερον διττόν  
ἐστίν· καὶ γὰρ ἡ ζωὴ διττὴ ἐστίν· ἔστι γὰρ φυσικὴ,  
ἔστι καὶ προαιρετικὴ. καὶ φυσικὴ μὲν ζωὴ ἐστὶ  
συνάφεια τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος, καθ’ ἣν  
χορηγεῖ τῷ σώματι ἡ ψυχὴ αἴσθησιν καὶ κίνησιν,  
καθ’ ἣν ἅπαντες ζῶμεν,

καθ’ ἣν τὸ σῶμα δεσμεῖ τὴν ψυχὴν.

ὅθεν καὶ δέμας λέγεται οἰονεὶ δεσμός τῆς ψυχῆς.

ὅθεν καὶ σῶμα λέγεται οἰονεὶ σῆμα καὶ τάφος τῆς  
ψυχῆς.

Nam ut constet animal, necesse est

ut in corpore anima uinciatur:

ideo corpus δέμας hoc est uinculum  
nuncupatur.

et σῶμα quasi quoddam σῆμα id est animae  
sepulcrum.

<sup>300</sup> It is worth noting that it is far from certain that this text was really written by a Christian named David. As Wildberg 1990, 44–5, demonstrates, nothing in David’s works indicates that he was a Christian besides his name; it is possible that these works were originally anonymous and were only later attributed to an author with a Christian name.



<p>One must know that life is opposed to death. For life is the possession and cause of our existence, while death is its deprivation; and each of those has two kinds. For, in fact, life has two kinds, physical and self-willed. Physical life is a union of the soul and the body, by which the soul supplies the body with sense perception and movement, by which we all live, and by which the body enchains (δεσμεῖ) the soul.</p> <p>This is why it is called δέμας, as a sort of chain (δεσμός) for the soul, and that is why it is called σῶμα, as a sort of tomb (σῆμα) and grave for the soul.</p>	<p>For a creature to have existence, it is necessary</p> <p>that a soul be bound in the body;</p> <p>for this reason the body is called δέμας, that is a “bond,” and σῶμα, a σῆμα, as it were, being a “tomb” of the soul (trans. W.H. Stahl, altered).</p>
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As this synoptic table demonstrates, there is a verbatim agreement between these two passages.<sup>301</sup> It seems that this agreement went unnoticed in academic publications. Since it is unlikely that David’s Greek text depends on Macrobius’ Latin text, the two passages must depend on a common source. As William Harris Stahl notes, “Macrobius seems to have drawn most of his doctrines from Porphyry’s works”,<sup>302</sup> it is likely that the author of this common source was also Porphyry.<sup>303</sup>

Regardless of whether or not Macrobius and David drew on Porphyry, it is clear that at some point in late antiquity someone came up with a formula for the Platonist notion that bodies are prisons. This late antique δέμας-δεσμός formula, along with Plato’s σῶμα-σῆμα formula, constitute an important context for the Thomasine σῶμα-πτῶμα formula.

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<sup>301</sup> It is also worth noting that the comparison of these two texts makes the text of Macrobius more understandable; David’s parallel text makes it clear that Macrobius identifies δέμας with δεσμός and not with δέμα (*pace* Stahl 1952, 130).

<sup>302</sup> Stahl 1952, 33.

<sup>303</sup> Admittedly, this suggestion does not find support in the extant fragments of Porphyry. Mras 1933, 253, tries to prove otherwise and argues that *Comm. Somn. Scip.* 1.11.3 reflects Porphyry’s derivation of δέμας from δέω, citing Proclus, *Comm. Tim.* 1.208.9–12 Diehl (= Porphyry, *Comm. Tim.* fr. 28 Sodano), where Porphyry says that “those who lay claim to virtue (οἱ τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀντεχόμενοι)” are in prison (ἐν φρουρᾷ ὄντες) and “have been apprehended by the body as if it were a jail (ὑπὸ τοῦ σώματος ὡς δεσμωτηρίου συνειλημμένοι)” (trans. D. T. Runia and M. Share, slightly altered). This suggestion is hardly compelling, since δεσμωτήριον in the Porphyrian fragment is merely an allusion to *Crat.* 400c, just like φρουρά is an allusion to *Phaed.* 62b. Neither Porphyry here nor Plato in *Cratylus* derives δέμας from δέω. This, of course, does not mean that Porphyry was unaware of this etymology of δέμας, nor does it mean that he was *not* the author of the source used commonly by Macrobius and David.

#### Excursus IV. A Note on *Thomas* 77:1

In chapter 5, I have argued that the stone/wood saying was originally preceded by *Thomas* 30:1–2, and that the sequence we find in NHC II, where the stone/wood saying follows *Thomas* 77:1, is secondary. This conclusion arouses suspicion that *Thomas* 77:1 could have been a later addition to *Thomas*. In what follows, I will argue that this is not the case; rather, *Thomas* 77:1 was part of the original text.

77:1a πεχε ιϥ δε ανοκ πε πογοειν παει ετχιχωου τηρου

77:1b ανοκ πε πτηρη

77:1c ητα πτηρη ει εβολ ηρητ

77:1d αγω ητα πτηρη πωρ ωαρπει

77:1a Jesus says: “It is I who am the light which is above them all.

77:1b It is I who am the all.

77:1c From me did the all come forth,

77:1d and unto me did the all extend.”

In *Thomas* 77:1a Jesus says that he is the light that is “above them all (χιχωου τηρου).” The identity of “them” appears to be obscure. One could, perhaps, argue that Jesus refers to the moth (χοολες) and the worm (υφιτ) of *Thomas* 76:3. This, however, appears to be a very unlikely option: successive Thomasine sayings may be united by catchwords or a common theme, but they never contain explicit references to each other.

It seems more plausible that χιχωου τηρου in the Coptic text is a clumsy rendering of ἐπάνω πάντων or a similar Greek expression. In fact, a very similar rendering is present in another saying, *Thomas* 6:4, which is partially preserved in Greek. While the relevant part of the Greek text is lost, Attridge’s restoration seems to be secure, so we can be fairly certain that “they all” in the Coptic version corresponds to πάντα in the original Greek text:

*Thomas* 6:4 (P.Oxy. 654)

*Thomas* 6:4 (NHC II)

[πάντα ἐνώπιον τ]ῆς ἀληθ[ε]ίας ἀν[αφαίνεται] ϥεβολπ τηρου εβολ ηπεμτο εβολ ητ<η>ε<sup>304</sup>

[All things are plain in the sight] of truth.

[They all are plain in the sight of <truth>.

Moreover, the Greek phrase ἐπάνω πάντων is translated as “above them all” in the early Fayyūmic (dialect *F*4) version of John 3:31. This verse is preserved by a Greek-Coptic diglot stored at the British Library (Or. 5707).<sup>305</sup> The manuscript has been dated paleographically to the sixth century CE.<sup>306</sup>

<sup>304</sup> This emendation is discussed in chapter 1.

<sup>305</sup> It is numbered as Uncial 086 in the Gregory-Aland system and as fa 6 in the SMR database. See Aland and Aland 1989, 120; Askeland 2012, 158–60.

<sup>306</sup> See Crum and Kenyon 1900, 415.

The following synoptic table compares the Greek and early Fayyūmic texts of John 3:31 according to this manuscript:

ὁ ἄν[ω]θεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν	πεταχι ε[βαλ] ζμ πχι[ci] qpi]xen ou[an nibi]
ὁ [ὦν ἐ]κ τ[ῆς] γῆς [ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐ]στι καὶ ἐκ	π[ie]βαλ Δ[ε] ζμ πκε]zi ou[εβαλ] ζ[μ πκε]zi
τῆς γῆς λαλεῖ· ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐ(ρα)νοῦ ἐρχόμενος	πε] αγω αqwexi eβαλ ζμ πκεzi · πεταχι
<u>ἐπάνω πάντω(ν) ἐστίν</u> <sup>307</sup>	εβαλ ζμ πχιci · qcaπχιci mmay tthloy <sup>308</sup>

The one who comes from above is above all; the one [who is] of the earth belongs [to the earth] and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is above all (NRSV).

The one who comes from on high is above everyone; the one who is out of the earth is out of the earth; and it is out of the earth that he speaks. The one who comes from on high is above them all.

As this synoptic table demonstrates, in the early Fayyūmic version of John 3:31, the Greek phrase ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν is rendered in two different ways. In the first instance, it is translated as [qpi]xen ou[an nibi], “he is above everyone” (cf. qrixn ouon nim in the Sahidic version of John 3:31 and qcaπawi noouon niben in the Bohairic one). In the second instance, however, it is translated as qcaπχιci mmay tthloy, “he is above them all.” This translation is clumsy, as it results in the sudden appearance of “them.” It is very likely that the Coptic text of *Thomas* 77:1a is similarly a result of a poor decision made by the translator.

Since the Coptic text of *Thomas* 77:1a is a clumsy translation of the Greek text, it follows that *Thomas* 77:1 likely existed before it was joined together with *Thomas* 77:2–3 (as I have argued in section 5.4, *Thomas* 77:1 and *Thomas* 77:2–3 were probably joined together at the Coptic stage of the transmission of the text). What is less clear is whether or not *Thomas* 77:1 was part of the original *Thomas*. While some might think that it was, others might suspect that it was a later addition. The following two tables describe these two possible scenarios:

Scenario #1

Original <i>Thomas</i>	Redaction #1
<i>Thomas</i> 30:1–4	– <i>Thomas</i> 30:3–4
<i>Thomas</i> 77:1	+ <i>Thomas</i> 77:2–3

<sup>307</sup> Schmid, Elliott, and Parker 2007, 92–3.

<sup>308</sup> Crum and Kenyon 1900, 425.

## Scenario #2

Original <i>Thomas</i>	Redaction #1	Redaction #2
<i>Thomas</i> 30:1–4	+ <i>Thomas</i> 77:1	– <i>Thomas</i> 30:3–4 + <i>Thomas</i> 77:2–3

While Scenario #1 involves only one editorial stage, Scenario #2 presupposes two such stages. It seems reasonable, therefore, to prefer Scenario #1 as the more economical explanation. That is, unless there is a reason to give preference to the more complex option. And one might argue that there is perhaps such a reason: while in sayings 56 and 80, Jesus says that the world is a corpse, in *Thomas* 77:1, he declares that he is the all. The latter claim seems to have pantheistic overtones and thus seems to contradict the former with its emphatically negative attitude towards the universe.

It is worth noting, however, that, whereas ancient readers of *Thomas* 77:1 would certainly have understood the text as a pantheistic statement, this does not necessarily mean that a pantheistic interpretation does justice to *Thomas* 77:1. It is more reasonable to approach Jesus' statement in *Thomas* 77:1b, ἀνοκ πε πτηρϥ ("I am the all"), in its immediate context. In *Thomas* 77:1c–d, Jesus says that the all (πτηρϥ) came from him and reached him, which implies that Jesus and the all are two separate entities, at least to some extent. This distinction between Jesus and the all is also presupposed in *Thomas* 77:1a, where Jesus says that he is "the light that is above all." Hence, the words ἀνοκ πε πτηρϥ should not be taken at face value, but with a certain qualification: Jesus is not the all in the absolute sense; rather, in some respect, he is the all and, in some respect, he is not.

Since, in *Thomas* 77:1a, Jesus explicitly describes himself as the light, it follows that, according to *Thomas* 77:1b, he is the all in so far as he is the light. The idea that Jesus as the light is the all appears to be in line with other Thomasine sayings. According to *Thomas*, ultimate reality, which can be called either "the kingdom" or "the light" (these two names of ultimate reality are essentially synonymous; see, for instance, *Thomas* 49:2 and 50:1), is spread out upon the earth (saying 113). As I have pointed out in section 5.4, according to *Thomas* 30:3–4, Jesus (who, incidentally, calls himself "the light" in *Thomas* 77:1a) is omnipresent, for he pervades everything, including lifeless objects. Finally, as I will argue in chapter 11, *Thomas* 83:1 advances the idea that there is light within mundane objects. These Thomasine parallels make it plausible that *Thomas* 77:1b should be understood to the effect that Jesus is the all inasmuch as he is the all-pervading light. Thus, *Thomas* 77:1a–b seems to describe the dual nature of Jesus: he is the light that is both above everything and in everything; he is omnipresent, yet superior to all things.

This interpretation of *Thomas* 77:1 seems to provide us with an opportunity to gain better insight into the reason why the stone/wood saying was moved to the place it occupies in NHC II (*Thomas* 77:1 → *Thomas* 77:2–3). The redactor responsible for this rearrangement likely discovered that the stone/wood saying may supplement the portrayal of Jesus as the light. In other words, in the context of saying 77, the stone/wood saying describes Jesus' luminous nature. As Sellew puts it, "What places are darker and less open to the light, under normal circumstances, than the inside of logs and what lies underneath stones?"<sup>309</sup> Hence, the point that Jesus makes in *Thomas* 77:2–3 is that, as the light, he is able to reach and illuminate the darkest and remotest places. It is possible that by

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<sup>309</sup> Sellew 2006, 51.

adding the stone/wood saying to *Thomas 77:1*, the redactor made an attempt to reconcile the two aspects of Jesus' nature described in *Thomas 77:1a–b*. Jesus can be superior to everything and, at the same time, omnipresent thanks to the all-pervading nature of light. As the sun is above all things and at the same time reaches everything with its rays of light, so also is Jesus as a luminous being above everything and at the same time pervades everything.<sup>310</sup>

To sum up, while *Thomas 77:1* and *Thomas 77:2–3* were probably juxtaposed only at the Coptic stage, there seems to be no good reason to assume that *Thomas 77:1* was a later addition to the “original” *Thomas*. This saying seems to be at home with other Thomasine passages that describe ultimate reality as the light that is alien to this world, yet somehow present in it. As for the stone/wood saying, while it was not originally a part of saying 77, the redactor's decision to rearrange the original text was not entirely unreasonable: after it was added to *Thomas 77:1*, it became an important part of the description of Jesus as the light.

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<sup>310</sup> Cf. Eisele 2010, 167–8.

## 6. *Thomas* and the Platonists on the Body and the Soul

In this chapter, I would like to discuss the Thomasine views on the nature of the human soul and its relationship with the body. I will mainly discuss sayings 29, 87, and 112. I will argue that *Thomas* does not adhere to the tripartite anthropological model. In my opinion, sayings 29, 87, and 112, while using different terms (“soul” vs. “spirit”), express the same idea of soul-body dualism. I will also argue that, while the importance of Platonism for the understanding of Thomasine anthropology can hardly be overestimated, saying 112 should not be read as a concise paraphrase of *Tim.* 87c–88b. A much more viable option is to read this saying against the background of *Phaed.* 64a–70b.

In what follows, I will briefly present the sayings that appear to be crucial for this discussion, viz. sayings 29, 87, and 112. I will then focus on the terminology employed in these sayings and ascertain whether *Thomas* distinguishes the flesh (σάρξ) from the body (σῶμα), and the soul (ψυχή) from the spirit (πνεῦμα). My answer to both questions will be in the negative: Thomasine anthropology is bipartite; the only anthropological distinction this text maintains is between the corporeal (body/flesh) and the incorporeal (soul/spirit). Finally, I will point out that *Thomas* does not commend the balance of the body and the soul, but rather maintains that the body and the soul are hostile to each other and thus exhorts the reader to despise the former and take care of the latter.

### 6.1. Interpretative Notes on Sayings 29, 87, and 112

29:1 πεχε ιϭ εωχε ντα τσαρξ ωωπε ετβε πνα<sup>311</sup> ογωπηρε τε 29:2 εωχε πνα δε ετβε πωμα ογωπηρε νωπηρε<sup>312</sup> πε<sup>313</sup> 29:3 αλλα ανοκ ιρ ωπηρε ηπαει δε πας ατρεينوσ ηννιτρημασ ασογωε ςν τεεινντηνε

29:1 Jesus says: “If the flesh came into being because of the spirit, it is a wonder. 29:2 But if the spirit (came into being) because of the body, it is a wonder of wonders. 29:3 Yet I marvel at how this great wealth has taken up residence in this poverty.”<sup>314</sup>

Although *Thomas* 29:1–2 is sometimes interpreted as an allusion to a creation myth,<sup>315</sup> I tend to agree with Risto Uro who points out that such an interpretation “remains but one of the

<sup>311</sup> For the omission of the definite article π- before nouns beginning with π in NHC II, see Nagel 1969, 399.

<sup>312</sup> The literal meaning of ογωπηρε νωπηρε is “a marvelous marvel,” which would correspond to θαῦμα θαυμάσιον in the Greek *Vorlage*. It is likely, however, that the *Vorlage* of *Thomas* 29:2 read θαῦμα θαυμάτων, “a marvel of marvels,” as in Pseudo-Origen’s report on the teaching of the Naassenes (*Ref.* 5.8.18). Admittedly, the expression θαῦμα θαυμάτων is not a unique phrase: it also occurs in T. Ab. (recension A) 7:10 and Galen, *Us. part.* 15.7 = 4.248 Kühn = 2.365 Helmreich). Yet the fact that, elsewhere, the Naassenes of Pseudo-Origen undoubtedly make use of sayings 4 (*Ref.* 5.7.20), 11 (5.8.32), and 33 (5.7.28) makes it very likely that θαῦμα θαυμάτων in 5.8.18 is an allusion to *Thomas* 29:2.

<sup>313</sup> Grammatically, πε in *Thomas* 29:2 may refer back to either πνα or πωμα, but the parallel structure of *Thomas* 29:1–2 makes it clear that Jesus refers to the spirit: since τε in *Thomas* 29:1 refers to τσαρξ, πε in *Thomas* 29:2 must refer to πνα.

<sup>314</sup> The Berliner Arbeitskreis puts the closing quotation mark after *Thomas* 29:2 and suggests that the “I” of *Thomas* 29:3 “belongs to some commentator” (Plisch 2008, 96). I do not find this proposal appealing, since the whole saying makes perfect sense as a coherent argument made by one person.

<sup>315</sup> See, e.g., Patterson 2013, 43.

alternatives.”<sup>316</sup> It seems reasonable to try to take this saying at face value, interpreting it as a verbalized thinking process. Jesus is speculating on how the unholy mix of flesh and spirit came into being. If it is on account of the spirit that the flesh came into existence, then the flesh is a wonder; if, on the other hand, the spirit came into existence on account of the flesh, then the spirit is a wonder of wonders. Regardless of what came first and what later, the fact that these two entities are combined with each other is astonishing. It is astonishing, because the spirit is “wealth” and the flesh is “poverty”; in other words, they have nothing in common. In any case, what is important for the following discussion is that the spirit is clearly superior to the body.

87:1 πεχαρα̅ ν̅σι ι̅ς̅ χ̅ε ο̅γταλαιν̅ωρον̅ πε̅ π̅σω̅να̅ ε̅τα̅ω̅ε̅ ν̅ογ̅σω̅να̅ 87:2 α̅γ̅ω̅ ο̅γ̅τα̅λαι̅π̅ω̅ρος̅ τ̅ε̅  
τ̅γ̅γ̅χη̅ ε̅τα̅ω̅ε̅ ν̅η̅αι̅ ν̅ι̅π̅να̅γ̅

87:1 Jesus said: “Wretched is the body that depends on a body. 87:2 And wretched is the soul that depends on these two.”

112:1 πε̅χε̅ ι̅ς̅ χ̅ε̅ ο̅γ̅ο̅ει̅ ν̅ι̅τ̅σα̅ρ̅ζ̅ τ̅αι̅ ε̅το̅ω̅ε̅ ν̅ι̅τ̅γ̅γ̅χη̅ 112:2 ο̅γ̅ο̅ει̅ ν̅ι̅τ̅γ̅γ̅χη̅ τ̅αι̅ ε̅το̅ω̅ε̅ ν̅ι̅τ̅σα̅ρ̅ζ̅

112:1 Jesus says: “Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul. 112:2 Woe to the soul that depends on the flesh.”

Sayings 87 and 112 constitute one of the five pairs of doublets in *Thomas*; they resemble each other lexically, structurally, and conceptually.<sup>317</sup> On the other hand, there are notable differences between these two sayings. Most remarkably, saying 112 has no parallel for the notion of the body that depends on another body in saying 87. Scholars have offered several different interpretations for these two “bodies.” For instance, according to Uro,<sup>318</sup> since the world, according to sayings 56 and 80,<sup>319</sup> is a body, the body on which the other body depends is the world. As insightful as it is, this interpretation appears to be problematic from a strictly grammatical perspective: in all likelihood, the fact that the indefinite article ο̅γ̅ precedes the word σω̅να̅ indicates that, in the Greek *Vorlage* of *Thomas* 87:1, the word σῶμα was anarthrous. Thus, according to *Thomas* 87:1, every single body that depends on another body is wretched.

The principle described in *Thomas* 87:1 is, therefore, universal. While it is applicable to an individual body that is dependent upon the world, it is also applicable to the human body, “which depends for sustenance on the devouring of corpses,”<sup>320</sup> to the lover who depends on the object of his desire, to the slave who depends on his master, and so on. There can be little doubt that saying 87 is intentionally formulated in such a universalistic and abstract fashion that any of the aforementioned interpretations would do it justice. What is important, however, is that the discussion of the bodies in *Thomas* 87:1 lays the groundwork for the description of the misfortunes of the embodied soul in *Thomas* 87:2. The ultimate point of saying 87 is the following: every single body that is dependent

<sup>316</sup> Uro 2003, 64.

<sup>317</sup> See Ásgeirsson 1997, 75.

<sup>318</sup> See Uro 2003, 61.

<sup>319</sup> I discuss these two sayings in chapter 5.

<sup>320</sup> Davies 1983, 76.

upon another body is wretched, but the soul that is dependent upon a body, which is itself dependent upon another body is doubly wretched.

It is also worth noting that, while saying 87 contrasts the body with the soul, saying 112 contrasts the soul with the flesh. Although some early Christian texts certainly make a distinction between the flesh and the body,<sup>321</sup> the fact that sayings 87 and 112 constitute a doublet makes it likely that, in these two sayings, the terms *σῶμα* and *σάρξ* are, in fact, synonyms. Moreover, in *Thomas* 29:1–2 (quoted above), these two terms also appear to be synonymous.<sup>322</sup> Thus, it follows that *Thomas* uses the terms “body” and “flesh” interchangeably.

## 6.2. Tripartite Anthropology in *Thomas*?

While saying 29 speaks of the relations between the body/flesh and the *spirit*, sayings 87 and 112 speak of the relations between the body/flesh and the *soul*. Moreover, while saying 29 asserts that body/flesh is “poverty” and spirit, “wealth,” sayings 87 and 112 do not explicitly state whether the body/flesh or the soul is superior to its counterpart. These facts could indicate that the soul and the spirit play different roles in Thomasine anthropology. In what follows, I would like to demonstrate that this is not the case and that the two terms are, in fact, synonyms.

It is well known that some early Christians acknowledged a difference between the soul and the spirit, e.g. 1 Cor 2:13–15; 15:46–47; Jude 19. Not everyone in the ancient world was, however, familiar with the distinction: as Richard A. Horsley points out, in Wis 15:11 the terms *ψυχὴ* and *πνεῦμα* are used as synonyms.<sup>323</sup> Which of the two scenarios are we dealing with in the case of *Thomas*?

In his seminal article on the impact of Platonism on *Thomas*, Stephen J. Patterson suggested that *Thomas* adhered to the tripartite anthropological model outlined in Plutarch’s *Fac.* 943a. According to Plutarch, every human being is a combination of three elements: the body, the soul, and the mind (*νοῦς*). It is wrong to think of the mind as a part of the soul: “for in the same degree as soul is superior to body so is mind better and more divine than soul” (trans. H. Cherniss and W.C. Helmbold). According to Patterson, the anthropology of *Thomas* is identical with the one outlined by Plutarch with only one exception: instead of the term *νοῦς*, *Thomas* employs the term *πνεῦμα*.

There is certainly some truth to Patterson’s point; as I will try to show in this chapter, it is indeed very likely that Thomasine anthropology is indebted to Middle Platonist anthropology. On the other hand, it seems that Patterson attaches too much importance to the quoted Plutarchan passage. In fact, Plutarch seems to make such a sharp distinction between soul and mind in *Fac.* 943a, in order to make his anthropology coherent with the eschatological myth he tells shortly after.<sup>324</sup> It is not the only instance where Plutarch acts as the occasion demands: when telling another eschatological myth (*Gen. Socr.* 591d–e), he modifies his anthropology by saying that *νοῦς*, being a *δαίμων*, exists outside the human being. As Werner Deuse has recently pointed out, there is no “uniform conception” of mind-soul relations in Plutarch’s writings. In order to understand why Plutarch chose this particular anthropological model, one should ascertain what the intention of the text in question is.<sup>325</sup>

<sup>321</sup> See, e.g., the discussion of Paul’s anthropology in Bultmann 1952–1955, 1:192–203, 232–9.

<sup>322</sup> Cf. Uro 2003, 62–3; Plisch 2008, 96.

<sup>323</sup> See Horsley 1976, 272.

<sup>324</sup> See Deuse 2010, 185–6.

<sup>325</sup> See Deuse 2010, 186.



Remarkably, in *Virt. mor.* 441d–442a, where Plutarch does not hide behind the mask of a fictional character,<sup>326</sup> he follows Plato in speaking about two parts of the soul, the rational and the irrational.

It is evident that the view outlined in Plutarch's *Fac.* 943a should not be seen as a *communis opinio*; in fact, νοῦς and ψυχή were sometimes used as mere synonyms. As Horsley points out, this is the case with Wis 9:15.<sup>327</sup> The same holds true for the Corpus Hermeticum. According to Horsley, Poimandres does not “maintain any anthropological distinction” between νοῦς and ψυχή; according to him, νοῦς and ψυχή “stand more in a parallel relationship than in a superior–inferior one.”<sup>328</sup> See especially Corp. Herm. 1.17:

ὁ δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ φωτὸς ἐγένετο εἰς ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦν, ἐκ μὲν ζωῆς ψυχὴν, ἐκ δὲ φωτὸς νοῦν

From life and light the man became soul and mind; from life came soul, from light came mind (trans. B. P. Copenhaver).

According to Corp. Herm. 1.21, one can obtain salvation only by learning that he or she came from light and life, because the deity, called ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ (“god and father”), is light and life.<sup>329</sup> Since soul and mind originate from life and light, and since life and light are clearly not subordinate to each other, Horsley's observation is most certainly correct.

Another problem with Patterson's interpretation is that, according to him, *Thomas* adheres to the Platonist tripartite anthropological model as described by Plutarch, even though the term νοῦς is never employed in *Thomas*, which, instead of νοῦς, speaks of πνεῦμα. Patterson argues that this latter term is “a middle Platonic synonym for νοῦς.”<sup>330</sup> There is, however, only one ancient author who sometimes uses the term πνεῦμα as an equivalent for the term νοῦς: Philo. The reason why Philo employed the term in such a way is, according to Patterson, the Platonist exegesis of the biblical account of the creation of humankind; thus, God's “breath” (Gen 2:7 LXX: πνοή) was understood as πνεῦμα, and πνεῦμα as νοῦς.<sup>331</sup>

Patterson's hypothesis appears to be quite similar to the claim Birger Pearson made in 1973. According to Pearson, Hellenistic Jews preferred to use the term πνεῦμα instead of the term νοῦς.<sup>332</sup> As Horsley has pointed out, this claim is unsubstantiated.<sup>333</sup> The same holds true for Patterson's train of thought. First, it is clear that some Jews, e.g. Paul, distinguished between πνεῦμα and νοῦς (see 1 Cor 14:14). Some early Christians were also aware of this distinction, e.g. the Gospel of Mary (BG 10.20–23). Second, as I am going to demonstrate, Philo's exegesis of Gen 2:7 did not always lead to

<sup>326</sup> The narrator of the myth in *De facie in orbe lunae* is Sulla; the narrator of the myth in *De genio Socratis* is Simmias.

<sup>327</sup> Horsley 1976, 272: “In 9:15 ψυχή and πνεῦμα [sic] are parallel, synonymous terms for the soul which the corruptible, earthly body weighs down.” Horsley's πνεῦμα is clearly a misprint for νοῦς.

<sup>328</sup> Horsley 1976, 270. It is worth noting, however, that Horsley mistakenly states that in Poimandres νοῦς and πνεῦμα are synonyms. In reality, the Hermetic πνεῦμα is, as C. H. Dodd puts it, “one of the higher material elements, along with fire and air.” See Dodd 1953, 216.

<sup>329</sup> Cf. Pearson 1973, 8.

<sup>330</sup> Patterson 2013, 42.

<sup>331</sup> See Patterson 2013, 40–1.

<sup>332</sup> Pearson 1973, 11.

<sup>333</sup> See Horsley 1976, 271.

the conclusion that πνεῦμα and νοῦς are synonyms. His use of the terms ψυχή and πνεῦμα is inconsistent, the meaning of the term πνεῦμα in the Philonic corpus is often ambiguous and confusing, and it is doubtful whether Philo bears witness to any tradition that might have credited the Thomasine πνεῦμα with its alleged Platonist meaning.

Philo explicitly identifies πνεῦμα and νοῦς in *Det.* 80–4. In this passage, he deals with an exegetical problem: his goal is to make away the discrepancies between the ψυχή ζωσα of Gen 2:7 and the ψυχή σαρκός of Lev 17:11. Philo says that within all of us is both an animal and a human being and that there are two respective powers in each of us, the vital one (ἡ ζωτική sc. δύναμις) and the rational one (ἡ λογική sc. δύναμις). When Moses says, “The soul of all flesh (ἡ ψυχή πάσης σαρκός) is its blood” (Lev 17:11), he refers to the vital force. When he says that God breathed into the human’s face a breath of life (Philo alters πνοή ζωῆς to πνεῦμα ζωῆς) and “the human (ὁ ἄνθρωπος) became a living soul” (Gen 2:7), he refers to the rational force. Thus, according to Moses, there are two souls: blood is the carnal soul (σαρκός ψυχή) (Lev 17:11), while the human soul (ἀνθρώπου ψυχή) is πνεῦμα (Gen 2:7). The latter, according to Philo, is the superior form of the soul (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἄριστον εἶδος), which is also called “mind” and “reason” (νοῦς καὶ λόγος). This detailed paraphrase of a Philonic passage shows that Philo refers to the rational part of the human being with different terms, including not only νοῦς and πνεῦμα, but also ψυχή. The same holds true for another work where Philo deals with Gen 2:7:

For there are two things of which we consist, soul and body. The body, then, has been formed out of earth, but the soul is of the upper air (ἡ δὲ ψυχή αἰθέρος ἐστίν), a particle detached from the Deity (ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον): “for God breathed into his face a breath of life (πνεῦμα ζωῆς), and man became a living soul” (*Leg.* 3.161; trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker).

Once again, Philo alters πνοή ζωῆς to πνεῦμα ζωῆς, but in this case, it is ψυχή not πνεῦμα that is identified with the rational part of the human being.<sup>334</sup> Remarkably, while in this passage he says that, being ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον, soul is made out of ether, elsewhere (viz. *Spec.* 4.123), he speaks of αἰθέριον πνεῦμα. Even more remarkable is *Somn.* 1.30–4, where Philo asks what ὁ ἡγεμὼν νοῦς is and says that it is neither πνεῦμα nor blood, nor body in general (σῶμα συνόλως), because νοῦς is incorporeal (ἄσώματος).<sup>335</sup> He then once again says that νοῦς in humans is ἀπόσπασμα θεῖον, citing Gen 2:7 and retaining the expression πνοή ζωῆς this time. According to this Philonic text, πνεῦμα is neither referred to in Gen 2:7 nor has anything to do with νοῦς!

My last example shows to what extent Philo considered terminological preciseness unimportant. In *Fug.* 134, he describes ὁ νοῦς as ἔνθερμον καὶ πεπυρωμένον πνεῦμα, i.e. he applies to νοῦς the Stoic definition of ψυχή (Diogenes, *Vit. philos.* 7.157: ψυχή is πνεῦμα ἔνθερμον). Implying that ψυχή and νοῦς are ultimately the same thing, he defines νοῦς as “hot” πνεῦμα, thus using the term πνεῦμα in the Stoic sense.<sup>336</sup> This passage is thus in direct contradiction to the other passages where the relationship between νοῦς and πνεῦμα is discussed.

<sup>334</sup> Cf. Baer 1970, 14–5.

<sup>335</sup> Cf. Dodd 1953, 220.

<sup>336</sup> Pace Burton 1918, 158, 160–1.

In sum, Philo is blatantly careless in his use of terminology.<sup>337</sup> Sometimes he uses the terms νοῦς, πνεῦμα, and ψυχή as synonyms that designate the rational part of the human being. Other times, he says that νοῦς is not πνεῦμα, because, unlike πνεῦμα, νοῦς is incorporeal. Still other times, he says that the rational part of the human being is made out of ether, which means that νοῦς is, after all, corporeal.

Even though Philo occasionally identifies νοῦς with πνεῦμα, he does not seem to follow any well-established tradition. It follows that this identification, of which Philo is our only witness and which Philo by no means consistently maintains, was likely not a widespread Middle Platonist notion that could have made its way into *Thomas*. As for those passages where Philo does identify νοῦς with πνεῦμα, it does not seem justified to consider them as a background for the Thomasine use of πνεῦμα, since there are no indications of a Philonic influence on *Thomas*. Therefore, it is very unlikely that πνεῦμα in *Thomas* is a “code word” for the Middle Platonist νοῦς.

Admittedly, while it is not identical with the Middle Platonist νοῦς, the Thomasine πνεῦμα might also not be identical with ψυχή. It is worth noting, however, that there is nothing in *Thomas* that would imply that ψυχή and πνεῦμα are *not* synonyms. As I have already pointed out, these two terms are synonymous in Wis 15:11, as well as in some of the Philonic passages quoted above. The same may be the case with *Thomas*. It seems that at least one Thomasine saying supports this claim.

In saying 114, when Simon Peter says that ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἀξιόχρηστοι ἐσμὲν, “women are not worthy of life” (*Thomas* 114:1), Jesus makes the following remark about Mary:

114:2 πεχε ιϥ δε ειςζηντε ανοκ ιησωυκ ἡμος δεκαας εειναας ἡροογτ ρινα εσναωωπε  
 ρωωδς ἡογῖῖῖῖ εφονε εφεινε ἡμωτῖν ἡροογτ

114:2 Jesus said: “Jesus said, ‘I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you, men’” (trans. T. O. Lambdin, altered).<sup>338</sup>

In this saying, Jesus addresses his male disciples and tells them that he will make Mary like them, meaning that she will become a “living spirit.” I am inclined to agree with scholars who understand this expression as an allusion to the second account of the creation according to Genesis.<sup>339</sup> Two details of the second account of the creation are relevant for the present discussion. First, God breathes into the first human πνοή ζωής, “a breath of life,” thus making the human ψυχή ζῶσα, “a living soul” (Gen 2:7). Second, while, according to the first account of the creation, the created human (ὁ ἄνθρωπος) was both male and female (Gen 1:27), the second account claims that God first (Gen 2:7) created the human (ὁ ἄνθρωπος) called “Adam” (ὁ Ἀδάμ) and only later (Gen 2:22) fashioned a woman (γυνή) from the rib that he had taken from Adam. Although the second account of the creation does not explicitly state that the first human was male, it is clear that it was interpreted this way by at least some of its ancient readers, e.g. 1 Tim 2:13–4.

<sup>337</sup> Cf. Dodd 1953, 219.

<sup>338</sup> I understand ἡροογτ as a direct address; cf. the Sahidic translation of Eph 5:25, Col 3:19, and 1 Pet 3:7, where ἡροογτ corresponds to the vocative οἱ ἄνδρες of the Greek text. It is worth noting that, in all these instances, the nominative usurps upon the domain of the vocative, hence οἱ ἄνδρες instead of ἄνδρες; see Blass, Debrunner, and Funk 1961, 81–2 (§147).

<sup>339</sup> See Perkins 1995, 558–560; DeConick 1996, 19–20; Kvalbein 2006, 214.

It is likely that the Thomasine notion of a “living πνεῦμα” (οὐρανῶν ἐσθλῆ) is inspired by the creation narrative of Gen 2:7 (it is worth noting that πνεῦμα and πνοή are cognate words) and that *Thomas* 114:2 understands this “living πνεῦμα” as male, because the first human of Gen 2:7 was male. By approaching saying 114 against the background of the second account of creation, we might gain further insight into the harsh words of Simon Peter: women are not worthy of life, because the first living being was male. Fortunately, according to Jesus, a woman can attain the condition of the primordial man (i.e. transform into a “living spirit”) and, by doing so, attain salvation.

For the purposes of the present discussion, it is worth noting that if *Thomas* 114:2 draws on Gen 2:7, then to become a “living spirit” means to attain the condition of Adam, when he became “a living soul.” In this respect, the Thomasine interpretation of Gen 2:7 is similar to the Philonic one. According to Philo, in Gen 2:7, Moses claimed that human’s soul is πνεῦμα (*Det.* 84) and that “that which God breathed into the human was nothing else than a divine spirit (πνεῦμα θεῖον)” (*Opif.* 135).<sup>340</sup>

It follows, therefore, that, for saying 114 in particular and for *Thomas* in general, the distinction between ψυχή and πνεῦμα is not significant. Thus, my conclusion is that not only is the term πνεῦμα in *Thomas* not equivalent to the Middle Platonist term νοῦς, but also that it is in fact likely that the anthropology of *Thomas* is not tripartite (flesh/body vs. soul vs. spirit), but bipartite (flesh/body vs. soul/spirit).

### 6.3. The Body vs. the Soul

The next question I need to address is what *Thomas* says about the relationship between the body and the soul. I would like to focus on the interpretation of the nature of the soul in saying 112. Quite notably, two prominent scholars of *Thomas*, Uro and Patterson, have recently offered a reading of the saying against the background of *Tim.* 87c–89a. The line of argument goes as follows.

According to Timaeus, the main dramatis persona of the dialogue, the living being (τὸ ζῶον), is the combination (τὸ συναμφότερον) of the body and the soul. Hence, “in determining health and disease or virtue and vice (ὕγίειαι καὶ νόσοι ἀρεταί τε καὶ κακίαι), no proportion or lack of it (συμμετρία καὶ ἀμετρία) is more important than that between soul and body” (87d; trans. D.J. Zeyl). If the soul is strong and excellent, but the body that carries it about is too weak, then the living being as a whole is not beautiful (οὐ καλόν). If the proportion is disturbed in the opposite way, the outcome is equally unfortunate. If, however, the body and the soul are a match, then the living being is “the most beautiful and the most pleasant of all things to behold (πάντων θεαμάτων κάλλιστον καὶ ἐρασμιώτατον).” Timaeus then goes on to provide examples of the mismatch between body and soul:

When within it (i.e. the living being) there is a soul more powerful than the body and this soul gets excited, it churns the whole being and fills it from inside with diseases, and when it concentrates on one or another course of study or inquiry, it wears the body out. And again, when the soul engages in public or private teaching sessions or verbal battles, the disputes and contentions that then occur cause the soul to fire the body up and rock it back and forth, so

<sup>340</sup> As the passages discussed above demonstrate, occasionally Philo even substitutes πνεῦμα ζωῆς for πνοή ζωῆς in the Biblical text: see *Det.* 80; *Leg.* 3.161.

inducing discharges which trick most so-called doctors into making misguided diagnoses. But when, on the other hand, a large body, too much for its soul, is joined with a puny and feeble mind, then, given that human beings have two sets of natural desires—desires of the body for food and desires of the most divine part of us for wisdom—the motions of the stronger part will predominate, and amplify their own interest. They render the functions of the soul dull, stupid and forgetful, thereby bringing on the gravest disease of all: ignorance (87e–88b; trans. D.J. Zeyl).

In order to avoid this unhappy quarrel, the body and the soul should be “in equipoise” (ἰσορρόπω). We should neither exercise our souls without also exercising our bodies nor our bodies without our souls (μήτε τὴν ψυχὴν ἄνευ σώματος κινεῖν μήτε σῶμα ἄνευ ψυχῆς). It is necessary for a mathematician to practice gymnastics and for an athlete to apply himself to arts (μουσική) and philosophy. As A. E. Taylor pointed out, Timaeus lays out the Pythagorean theory that health is ἰσονομία, the balance between the body and the soul.<sup>341</sup> It is also worth noting that this passage in *Timaeus* made an impact on some Middle Platonists. The importance of maintaining body and soul in equilibrium was later repeated by Plutarch (see, e.g., *Tu. san.* 135e–f; *Quaest. conv.* 681d–f; *Cons. ux.* 610a–b) and Apuleius (*Plat. Dogm.* 216–8).

Although Uro and Patterson both interpret saying 112 against the background of *Tim.* 87c–89a, their interpretations are significantly different. Patterson ascribes to *Thomas* the tripartite anthropology of the mortal body, the mortal soul, and the divine and immortal spirit (see section 6.2) and argues that the focus of saying 112 “is on the difficult relationship that exists between the body and the soul.” While the soul is not superior to the body, they are both inferior to the mind. They always struggle with each other, and what Plato described as the lack of balance between the body and the soul is, in fact, “the essence of mortal existence.”<sup>342</sup>

Even leaving aside Patterson’s questionable suggestion that the Thomasine anthropology is tripartite, his interpretation of saying 112 still remains problematic. *Thomas* does not hold that the body and the soul are equally abominable; while the body is malicious (see chapter 4), nothing indicates that there is something wrong with the soul. That the attitude of *Thomas* towards the soul is positive is clear from the wording of sayings 25 and 28.

In *Thomas* 28:3, Jesus says that his soul became afflicted for the sons of men. As Joachim Jeremias pointed out, “my soul” (ἡ ψυχὴ μου = ταῦτ’ ἐγώ) is a Semiticism that also occurs in Mark 14:34 (περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου, “my soul is deeply grieved”) and John 12:27 (ἡ ψυχὴ μου τετάρακται, “my soul is troubled”). In all these instances, “my soul” is identical with “I.”<sup>343</sup> It is unlikely that the Thomasine Jesus would use this expression to refer to himself, if the Thomasine term “soul” designated the mortal element within as distinct from the divine and immortal element.

In *Thomas* 25:1, Jesus says, “love your brother like your soul,” μερε πεκσον ἡὲ ἡτεκ’ ἐγώ. *Thomas* 25:1 is a version of the love commandment from Lev 19:18 LXX (ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself”) that achieved wide circulation among early Christians. It is worth noting that some texts (e.g. Mark 12:31) present this commandment the same way as phrased in Lev 19:18 LXX, while others (e.g. Barn. 19:5), like *Thomas*, counsel the love of

<sup>341</sup> See Taylor 1928, 623.

<sup>342</sup> Patterson 2013, 41–2.

<sup>343</sup> See Jeremias 1958, 71.

one's soul rather than of oneself. Quite remarkably, the Didache includes both variants and exhorts the reader to love others both ὡς σεαυτόν, "as yourself," (Did. 1:2) and ὑπὲρ τὴν ψυχὴν σου, "more than your soul" (Did. 2:7). There can be no doubt that these two expressions, used in the different versions of the love commandment, "your soul" and "yourself," are synonymous.<sup>344</sup> It is unlikely that, in *Thomas* 25:1, the Thomasine Jesus would say "as your soul" instead of "as yourself," if the soul were among the inferior elements of the human compound.

In sum, a careful reading of sayings 25 and 28 demonstrates that *Thomas* by no means treats the body and the soul as equals. Jesus refers to himself as "my soul" in *Thomas* 28:3, and he undoubtedly means "yourself" when he says "your soul" in *Thomas* 25:1. The phraseology of these sayings makes it clear that, in *Thomas*, the word "soul" designates one's own "self" or one's own "person." The Thomasine Jesus would not phrase these sayings the way they are, unless he considered the human being to be nothing other than the soul itself.

Jesus' attitude towards the body is drastically different; in saying 28, before he identifies himself with his soul (*Thomas* 28:3), he says that he merely "appeared" in the flesh (*Thomas* 28:1), implying that being in the flesh is incidental to his existence and unrelated to his true self. This unflattering portrayal of the body becomes even more evident when we turn to the other Thomasine sayings: the body is "poverty" (saying 29) and has no worth unless the soul inhabits it (cf. my discussion of sayings in 56 and 80 in chapter 5).

Uro's reading of saying 112 is different from that of Patterson. He points out that *Thomas* is aware of different ways of characterizing "the immortal or divine part of the human being," including but not limited to the "spirit," the "soul," the inner "kingdom" (*Thomas* 3:3), and the inner "light" (*Thomas* 24:3).<sup>345</sup> Thus, unlike Patterson, Uro does not assume that Thomasine anthropology presupposes fundamental differences between the soul and the spirit, but rather sees these two entities as identical. Uro furthermore argues that saying 112 expresses ideas that fundamentally agree with what Plato says about the body-soul relationship in his *Timaeus*.<sup>346</sup>

[*Thomas* 112:1] reveals a concern about the body. The body, too, can become unhappy if it depends upon the soul. Although *Thomas* does not say it, the logical implication is that the reverse can also be true. The body *can* be happy and healthy if no unhealthy relationship between body and soul exists.<sup>347</sup>

The saying, then, is not "an exhortation to neglect the body completely or to regard the body and soul as being hostile to each other."<sup>348</sup> As fascinating as this interpretation is, I do not think it does justice to the intellectual outlook advocated by *Thomas*. Saying 112 does not necessarily imply that the body and the soul should be in equipoise. The saying deals with the relationship between the embodied soul and the ensouled body. According to *Thomas* 112:1, the flesh/body that depends on the soul is wretched; according to *Thomas* 112:2, the soul that depends on the flesh/body is also wretched.

<sup>344</sup> Cf. Wengst 1984, 94; Niederwimmer 1998, 93; Plisch 2008, 90–1.

<sup>345</sup> Uro 2003, 64.

<sup>346</sup> Admittedly, Uro's primary focus here is on Plutarch, as he was roughly contemporary with the production of *Thomas*; it is worth noting, however, that, as I have already pointed out, in his observations on the body-soul relationship Plutarch merely follows in the footsteps of Plato's *Timaeus*.

<sup>347</sup> Uro 2003, 59.

<sup>348</sup> Uro 2003, 60.

Significantly, the third option, a harmonious coexistence of these two, is never mentioned. Nothing indicates that it is even on the table.

As I have already pointed out, sayings 87 and 112 constitute a doublet. The second halves of these two sayings (*Thomas* 87:2 and *Thomas* 112:2) are nearly identical and most certainly constitute the focal point of either of them: the soul that depends on the body is wretched, i.e. the soul should not depend on the body. Unlike their second halves, the first halves of these sayings are different: *Thomas* 87:1 discusses the body that depends on another body; *Thomas* 112:1 discusses the body that depends on the soul.

It is unlikely that either *Thomas* 87:1 or *Thomas* 112:1 have any significance in isolation from their respective counterparts. Rather, *Thomas* 87:1 and *Thomas* 112:1 pave the way for *Thomas* 87:2 and *Thomas* 112:2. It is the second halves of these two sayings that deliver the main message of the respective sayings overall: the soul should be independent from the body. It does not seem likely that *Thomas* 87:1 reveals a concern for those bodies that depend on other bodies; rather, the purpose of *Thomas* 87:1 is to place emphasis on *Thomas* 87:2 (even bodies suffer when they depend on other bodies; imagine what it is like for souls!). Similarly, *Thomas* 112:1 does not reveal any concern for the body that depends on the soul, but rather depicts an alternative to the situation described in *Thomas* 112:2. Thus, saying 112 contrasts the human dominated by the soul with the human dominated by the body, urging its reader to choose between two mutually exclusive options: either you subordinate your body to your soul, to the detriment of the body (*Thomas* 112:1), or you subordinate your soul to your body, to the detriment of the soul (*Thomas* 112:2).

Moreover, other Thomasine sayings hardly provide any support for the claim that *Thomas* is concerned with bodily wellbeing. Thomasine views on the body are by no means favorable. As I have pointed out in the previous chapter, *Thomas* maintains that bodies are corpses, as worthless and lifeless as stones and logs. Moreover, according to *Thomas* 29:3, the spirit/soul is “great wealth” and the body is “poverty,” and it is thus astonishing that the former should have taken up residence in the latter. It is clear, therefore, that the two entities in question, the body and the soul, are not of equal value. *Thomas* praises the soul and defames the body. The soul’s wellbeing is important; the body’s is not.

It follows, therefore, that, according to *Thomas*, the body and the soul are mortal enemies: they are in constant struggle and, whenever one of them prevails, the other necessarily suffers. Surely, there can be no doubt on whose side *Thomas* is: of the two alternatives presented in saying 112, viz. the dominance of the body at the expense of the soul and the dominance of the soul at the expense of the body. The reader is, of course, supposed to choose the latter option.

Thus, it is unlikely that saying 112 should be read against the background of *Tim.* 87c–88b. The fact that Platonists sometimes commended the balance of the body and the soul does not seem to have any bearing on the understanding of *Thomas*. With regard to the dialogues of Plato, the closest parallel to the sentiment expressed in sayings 29, 87, and 112 comes from *Phaedo*.

According to this dialogue, there are two classes of existence (δύο εἶδη τῶν ὄντων): the one that is invisible and always remains the same and the one that is visible and always changes (79a). The soul is more like the invisible existence than the body, whereas the body is more like the visible existence than the soul (79b). Clearly, then, the difference between the soul and the body is fundamental; as Plato’s Socrates puts it, “the soul is most like the divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, always the same as itself, whereas the body is most like that which is human,

mortal, multiform, unintelligible, soluble and never consistently the same” (*Phaed.* 80b; trans. G.M.A. Grube).

The body ought to be subjected to the soul: “Whenever the soul and the body are together, nature ordains the latter to be slave and to be ruled and the former to rule and be master (ἐπειδὴν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ὧσι ψυχὴ καὶ σῶμα, τῷ μὲν δουλεύειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι ἢ φύσις προστάττει, τῇ δὲ ἄρχειν καὶ δεσπόζειν)” (79e–80a).<sup>349</sup> The soul exercises its power by mastering the affections of the body (τὰ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα πάθη) and opposing them, e.g. by not letting the body drink when it is thirsty and eat when it is hungry (94b–e). It is worth noting, however, that Plato’s “nature” is a normative concept. As David Gallop points out, “the soul’s ‘natural’ fitness to rule the body does not mean that it always does so, just as in *Respublica* (430e–431a) the ‘natural’ superiority of reason does not mean that it is actually in control.”<sup>350</sup>

Thus, while the soul ought to rule over the body, the unsavory truth is that we are slaves to our own bodies (66b–d) and that the body acts as both the chains (67d) and the prison (82e) of the soul. The body is a hindrance to the soul’s philosophical quest, and the soul of a true philosopher “most disdains the body, flees from it and seeks to be by itself” (65d; trans. G.M.A. Grube). We will never fully possess the truth “as long as we have a body and our soul is contaminated by such an evil (τοιούτο κακόν)” (66b). For this reason, Socrates says that τὸ μελέτημα τῶν φιλοσόφων, “what philosophers practice doing,” is λύσις καὶ χωρισμός ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, “freeing and separating of the soul from the body,” i.e. death (67d).<sup>351</sup>

Similar sentiments often occur in writers of Platonist persuasion of the historical period roughly contemporary with the composition of *Thomas*. I will discuss one author, Maximus of Tyre, as an example. It is worth noting that, as M. B. Trapp points out, Maximus was not “a declared and partisan Platonist”—even though the principal manuscript of his *Dissertationes*, Parisinus Graecus 1962, calls Maximus a “Platonic philosopher,” Πλατωνικὸς φιλόσοφος. While he acknowledges “the division of philosophy into a multiplicity of competing sects,”<sup>352</sup> he never approves of it. Moreover, Maximus was by no means “a school philosopher offering a systematic course of instruction in philosophical doctrine.”<sup>353</sup> On the other hand, it is clear that the philosophical component of *Dissertationes* “is in practice consistently Platonizing, whatever the explicit account of philosophy and his own orientation within it Maximus may give.”<sup>354</sup>

In what follows, I summarize the notions on the body-soul relationship that Maximus expresses in *Diss.* 7, an oration where Maximus draws on the imagery of Plato’s dialogues to convince his

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<sup>349</sup> Cf. *Tim.* 34c, where the demiurge makes the world’s soul “to be the body’s mistress and to rule over it as her subject” (trans. D. J. Zeyl). Cf. also Aristotle’s *Protrepticus*: “Further, part of us is soul, part body; the one rules, the other is ruled; the one uses, the other is present as its instrument” (fr. 6 Ross = fr. B 59 Düring = Iamblichus, *Protr.* 7; trans. J. Barnes and G. Lawrence). In Hutchinson and Johnson 2005, 244–251, this fragment was proved to belong to Aristotle; cf. Jaeger 1948, 65–6.

<sup>350</sup> Gallop 1975, 141.

<sup>351</sup> Cf. the opening paragraph of Alcinous’ handbook, where he defines philosophy as λύσις καὶ περιαγωγή ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, “freeing and turning around of the soul from the body” (*Didasc.* 1.1; trans. J.M. Dillon). Dillon 1993a, 52, points out that this definition is a combination of *Phaed.* 67d and *Resp.* 521c, where Socrates speaks of “turning a soul (περιαγωγή ψυχῆς) from a day that is a kind of night to the true day” (trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve).

<sup>352</sup> Trapp 1997b, 1949.

<sup>353</sup> Trapp 1997a, xxiii.

<sup>354</sup> Trapp 1997a, xxvii.



audience of the superiority of the soul over the body.<sup>355</sup> The manuscript title of this oration is “Which Illnesses are the More Harsh, Those of the Body or Those of the Soul” (trans. M. B. Trapp).

The human being (ὁ ἄνθρωπος) is a compound of the body and the soul. These two components are not equal (*Diss.* 7.1). The latter rules over the former (τὸ μὲν αὐτοῦ ἄρχον, τὸ δὲ ἀρχόμενον). The body is like a people, and the soul is like their ruler. “The people are a creature swift to anger, vehement in its desires, dissipated in its pleasures, spineless in grief, and harsh in its rages (χρῆμα ὃξὺ ἐν ὀργαῖς, ἰσχυρὸν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις, ὕγρον ἐν ἡδοναῖς, δύσθυμον ἐν λύπαις, χαλεπὸν ἐν θυμοῖς), exactly like the passions of the body, which is itself desirous (ἐπιθυμητικόν), impetuous (ιτητικόν), hedonistic (φιλήδονον), and impulsive (ὀρμητικόν)” (trans. M. B. Trapp). The ruler, on the other hand, is by nature the strongest, most authoritative, honorable, prudent, and rational element in a state, just as the soul is in the human being. Hence, “the soul is more valuable than the body” (7.2; trans. M. B. Trapp, slightly altered).

Later on, Maximus argues that the noble soul even welcomes the dissolution of the body (οὐδὲ ἀκούσῃ εἶναι τῇ γενναίᾳ ψυχῇ φθορὰν σώματος). He illustrates his point in the following passage, where he combines Plato’s notion of the body as the soul’s prison, Plato’s notion of the body as the soul’s tomb (*Crat.* 400c; *Gorg.* 493a; *Phaedr.* 250c),<sup>356</sup> and the imagery of Plato’s allegory of the cave (*Resp.* 514a–517a):

You might compare the case of a prisoner who can see the wall of his prison (δεσμωτήριον; cf. Plato, *Crat.* 400c) rotting and crumbling and waits for release and freedom from his place of confinement (εἰργμός; cf. Plato, *Phaedr.* 82e), so that he can step from the deep and murky dark in which he has hitherto been buried (κατορώρυκτο), and look up to the high skies and glut himself on the bright light of day (trans. M. B. Trapp).

Skin, bones, and flesh are nothing else but “short-lived mantles and flimsy and tattered rags” of the soul. Thus, the good soul (ἡ ἀγαθὴ ψυχὴ) has no care (ἀμελεῖ) for the body and desires to strip it off as soon as possible (ὥς τάχιστα ἐφίεται γυμνωθῆναι). “But the wretched soul (ἡ δειλὴ ψυχὴ) that is earthed (κατορωρυγμένη) into the body like a sluggish creature in its burrow loves (φιλεῖ) that burrow and wishes never to be parted from it or to have to crawl out of it” (trans. M. B. Trapp). This love for the body will make the soul suffer until it comes to realize that “death is indeed a healer that will free you from misfortune and from an insatiable, disease-ridden beast,” i.e. from the body (7.5; trans. M. B. Trapp).

The ideological affinities between the Platonist notions of the body-soul relationship and sayings 29, 87, and 112 are evident. According to *Thomas*, the human being has two components, the body (occasionally called “the flesh”) and the soul (occasionally called “the spirit”). To describe the relationship between these two components, *Thomas* uses the term “dependence.” Either the soul depends on the body, or the body depends on the soul. In other words, either the soul dominates and the body obeys, or vice versa; there is no third option. In both cases, the component brought into subjection is “wretched.” As long as the human being lives, the embodied soul and the ensouled body are engaged in a constant struggle for dominance. The outcome of this struggle is a matter of utmost

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<sup>355</sup> Cf. Trapp 1997a, 59.

<sup>356</sup> I discuss these Platonic passages in chapter 5.

importance, since the body and the soul are by no means of equal worth: whereas the body is “poverty,” the soul is “great wealth,” and it eludes Jesus’ understanding how the latter has taken up residence in the former. Thus, in the struggle between the soul and the body, *Thomas* clearly vouches for the soul, meaning that the reader of *Thomas* ought to nurture the soul, disdain the body, and by no means allow the soul to become subjected to the body.

Thomasine anthropology thus makes great sense in light of the Platonist soul-body dualism. Plato and later Platonists maintained that the two components of the human being are in all respects different, and that the soul is undeniably better than the body. The passions are the body’s allies and together they go to great lengths to prevent the soul from contemplating the divine realm. The soul’s mission is thus to rule over and discipline the body, but the grim reality of human life is that instead of being in control, the soul remains the body’s slave. For this reason, we should neither regret nor resist the death of the body. While the ignorant soul inevitably feels attached to the body, the wise soul longs to escape its imprisonment from the body, to liberate itself from “this useless garment (τὸ δύσχρηστον τοῦτο περίβλημα)” (Maximus, *Diss.* 7.4).

It is worth noting that such comparison with the Platonist notions of the body-soul relationship makes better sense of the reasoning behind the “anthropological” sayings of *Thomas*. For instance, while the Thomasine Jesus never explains why the body that depends on the soul is wretched, it is likely that the body’s misery is rooted in its inability to pursue its urges. It is also likely that these sayings presuppose a positive evaluation of physical death. In the end, only the death of the body can terminate the soul’s captivity. Thus, it is possible that, when he says that the soul that depends on the body is wretched, the Thomasine Jesus envisions death as the soul’s ultimate escape from its misery, since only after the dissolution of the body will the soul achieve complete independence.

It seems plausible, therefore, that the author(s) of sayings 29, 87, and 112 had Platonist inclinations and that these sayings should be understood against a Platonist background. This thesis receives additional support from the fact that the Thomasine understanding of the body expressed in sayings 56 and 80 is, as I have argued in chapter 5, both indebted to and in dialogue with the Platonist tradition. Finally, it should be noted that the very dualism of Thomasine anthropology—i.e. the division of the human being into two opposing parts, a corporeal and an incorporeal one, identified as the body and the soul—also appears to be a Platonizing tendency.

According to Jackson P. Hershbell, “it is difficult to find any clear emphasis on the *σῶμα-ψυχή* division” in the early Christian literature before the apologists.<sup>357</sup> It is not until the time of the apologists that Hershbell is able to single out Diogn. 6 as a text with a “clearly formulated division of man into body and soul.”<sup>358</sup> This passage elaborates upon the analogy of the relationship between

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<sup>357</sup> Admittedly, there are several exceptions—e.g. Matt 10:28, where Jesus contrasts persecutors, who can kill the body but not the soul, with God, who can destroy both the body and the soul in Gehenna. This verse presupposes that the body and the soul are distinct and separable (cf. Gundry 1976, 115; *pace* Schweizer 1976, 247–8, who argues that, here, as in Matt 6:25, the terms *ψυχή* and *σῶμα* “designate man as a whole, but under different aspects”). Yet the Matthean Jesus does not contrast the body with the soul, but rather physical death with eternal punishment after the resurrection and the judgement. His point is not that the sufferings of the soul are worse than the sufferings of the body, but that the destruction of the whole person, the reunited body and soul, is far more serious than the destruction of the body alone. The embodiment of the soul is thus a prerequisite for eternal damnation. As Milikowsky 1988, 242, points out, in Matthew, “Gehenna is the place of retribution for the reunited body and soul; the soul by itself has no real existence and does not receive retribution.” Thus, the Matthean anthropology is dualistic, but only to some extent: while the soul can survive the dissolution of the body, it does not seem to be alive in the truest sense of the word, until it reunites with the resurrected body.

<sup>358</sup> Hershbell 1978, 146.

the soul (ψυχή) and the body/flesh (σῶμα/σάρξ) and that between the Christians and the world. According to this passage, the body is a “mortal dwelling place (θνητὸν σκήνωμα)” of the immortal soul (Diogn. 6:8); it hates (μισεῖ) the soul and is at war (πολεμεῖ) with it (Diogn. 6:5); the soul “is not of the body” (οὐκ ἔστι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος) (Diogn. 6:3); it is imprisoned (φρουρεῖται) (Diogn. 6:4) in and confined (ἐγκέλεισται) (Diogn. 6:7) within the body.

With respect to the present discussion, it is especially remarkable that, as Clayton N. Jefford has pointed out, “this vibrant image draws on various middle-Platonic considerations of reality.”<sup>359</sup> Already in the nineteenth century, J. K. T. Otto noted that the phrase “Christians are detained in the world as in prison (ὡς ἐν φρουρᾷ)” (Diogn. 6:7; cf. 6:4) is reminiscent of *Phaed.* 62b, where Socrates says that we are all “in a sort of prison (ἐν τινι φρουρᾷ).”<sup>360</sup> Henry G. Meecham pointed out that the claim that Christians are not allowed to abandon the position (τάξις) to which God (ὁ θεός) has appointed them reflects *Apol.* 28e–29a (cf. *Phaed.* 62b), where Socrates refuses to desert the post (τάξις) to which “god (ὁ θεός)” (i.e. Apollo) has ordained him.<sup>361</sup> Finally, Jefford has recently argued that the anthropology of Diogn. 6 ultimately derives from *Phaedr.* 245c–250c.<sup>362</sup>

Diogn. 6, with its portrayal of the opposition of the body to the soul, appears to offer the closest parallel to the Thomasine soul-body dualism. Diogn. 6 is also the most striking instance of the indebtedness of the author of Diognetus to the Platonist tradition.<sup>363</sup> It can hardly be a coincidence, and it seems likely that *Thomas* with its soul-body dualism also found its inspiration in Platonism.

Moreover, it seems that Thomasine anthropology is in a way more faithful to the Platonist understanding of the body-soul relationship than that of Diogn. 6. According to Diogn. 6:5–6, the flesh/body hates the soul, but the soul loves (φιλεῖ) the flesh/body nevertheless. This stands in marked contrast to what Maximus says in his *Diss.* 7.5 (cf. the discussion above): only the wretched soul loves the body; this love will cause nothing but misery. *Thomas* stresses the unworthiness of the body, which means that love for the body is most certainly out of the question.<sup>364</sup> In this respect, therefore, Diognetus goes against the Platonist tradition, whereas *Thomas* agrees with it.

<sup>359</sup> Jefford 2013, 64.

<sup>360</sup> Otto 1879, 182.

<sup>361</sup> See Meecham 1949, 117.

<sup>362</sup> See Jefford 2013, 224–5.

<sup>363</sup> Another early Christian text from the times of the apologists that divides the human person into body and soul is *Legatio pro Christianis* by Athenagoras (see 1.4; 36.2). Quite remarkably, *Legatio pro Christianis* is indebted to Platonism to a far greater degree than Diognetus. Not only did Athenagoras read Plato (see Barnard 1972b, 6–7) and admire him (see 23, 5–10; cf. Geffcken 1907, 213), he was also, as Jacobsen 2014, 82, puts it, “well placed in the Middle Platonic tradition.” Malherbe 2014, 2:827, even describes him as a “Christian Platonist.” It is worth noting that, though the biography of Athenagoras largely remains a mystery, some of the evidence suggests that he had Platonist affiliations: according to Philip of Side (*Hist. Christ.* fr. 2; see Heyden 2006, 214–5), Athenagoras “became a Christian while wearing the philosopher’s cloak and presiding over the Academy (τῆς Ἀκαδημαϊκῆς σχολῆς προϊστάμενος).” Moreover, he may be the same Athenagoras to whom Boethus dedicated his *Περὶ τῶν παρὰ Πλάτωνα ἀπορουμένων λέξεων*, “On Difficult Expressions in Plato” (Photius, *Bibl.* 155.100a.19–21 Bekker). Admittedly, this identification is questionable, but not impossible; cf. Zahn 1884, 60; Barnard 1972a, 16; Dyck 1985, 81.

<sup>364</sup> Only the soul is worthy of love (*Thomas* 25:1). As I have argued above, “your soul” in *Thomas* 25:1 means “yourself,” which implies that *Thomas* identifies the soul with the true self of the human person. This notion is, of course, in agreement with the Platonist tradition: “Since a man is neither his body, nor his body and soul together (τὸ συναμφότερον), what remains, I think, is either that he’s nothing, or else, if he *is* something, he’s nothing other than his soul” (Pseudo-Plato, *Alc. maj.* 130c; trans. D. S. Hutchinson); “For each of us is a soul, an immortal living being locked up in a mortal prison (τὸ θνητὸν φρούριον)” (Pseudo-Plato, *Ax.* 365e; trans. J. P. Hershbelt); cf. Plato, *Leg.* 959a–c.

#### 6.4. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the anthropology of *Thomas*. The results of my study are as follows. First, while, in my opinion, Patterson's suggestion that *Thomas* draws on Platonist anthropology is right, I find it unlikely that the Thomasine *πνεῦμα* is an equivalent of the Platonist *νοῦς*. As I have argued, the fact that Philo occasionally identifies *νοῦς* with *πνεῦμα* can hardly prove that such an identification was widespread among the Middle Platonists. Moreover, it is questionable whether the passages where Philo makes this identification are more relevant for the interpretations of *Thomas* than those where he does not. As I have pointed out, while Philo sometimes calls the rational part of the human being *πνεῦμα*,<sup>365</sup> he also calls it *ψυχή*. Although Gen 2:7 certainly was "a crucial text for showing on a scriptural basis that man is not only mortal but also immortal,"<sup>366</sup> in Philo's exegesis of this biblical verse *πνεῦμα* does not necessarily stand for what is immortal. In one of Philo's writings, *πνεῦμα* even belongs to the carnal (!) aspect of human nature.

Second, it is unlikely that *Thomas* adheres to a certain variety of the tripartite anthropology whereby it would consider the soul to be an entity inferior to the spirit. In all likelihood, just like different Thomasine sayings call the corporeal and inferior part of the human being either "body" or "flesh," so also they call the superior and incorporeal part either "soul" or "spirit." As I have argued, the use of the term *ψυχή* in sayings 25 and 28 suggests that *Thomas* envisions the soul as the true self of the human person and the body as an entity that is incidental to a person's existence. Such an antithesis of the body and the soul appears to be identical with that of the body and the spirit in saying 29, which describes the spirit that dwells in the body as the "great wealth" that has taken up residence in "poverty." The hypothesis that the Thomasine "soul" or "spirit" are synonymous receives additional support from my analysis of *Thomas* 114:2. As I have suggested, it is likely that the Thomasine notion of "a living male spirit" draws on the creation narrative of Gen 2:7, where God makes Adam "a living soul." The fact that *Thomas* 114:2 substitutes the *ψυχή* of Gen 2:7 with *πνεῦμα* indicates that *Thomas* does not envision these two terms as significantly different.

Third, it does not seem likely that Thomasine anthropology is indebted either to *Tim.* 87c–89a or to later Platonists who commend a balance between the body and the soul along the lines of this Platonic passage. It does not seem possible to reconcile the idea that the body and the soul can and should be in equipoise with the Thomasine contempt for the body. It is much more likely that, according to *Thomas*, the body and the soul are enemies, and that *Thomas* favors the soul. This sentiment has close parallels in the Platonist tradition, starting from Plato's *Phaedo* with its detailed account of the hostile relations between body and soul. As I have argued, it seems that the Platonist soul-body dualism had an impact on *Thomas*. It is against this background that Thomasine anthropology should be studied.

In the opening paragraph of his handbook, Alcinous defines philosophy as "freeing and turning around of the soul from the body" (*Didasc.* 1.1; trans. J. M. Dillon). As I have tried to argue, though *Thomas* is not a philosophical treatise, its understanding of human perfection is not much different from that of Alcinous and other Platonist and Platonizing authors. If we appreciate the Thomasine appropriation of Platonist soul-body dualism, we gain a deeper understanding of the theological

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<sup>365</sup> See, e.g., *Spec.* 1.171: τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν λογικόν πνεῦμα.

<sup>366</sup> Pearson 1973, 19.

orientation of this text and insight into the reasoning behind the sayings that deal with the human compound and its components.

## 7. *Thomas* and the Platonists on Oneness

The following four chapters focus on the Thomasine notion of perfection. I begin with the notion of “oneness.” Many Thomasine sayings invite the readers to “become one.” This motif was discussed in a seminal article by A. F. J. Klijn, who argued that it comes from the Jewish speculations about Adam being “one.”<sup>367</sup> In this chapter, I am going to revisit Klijn’s hypothesis and show that, even though the Thomasine motif of becoming one might have been influenced by certain Jewish traditions, it was to a great extent shaped by Platonist thought. I am also going to discuss whether the Platonist origins of the motif might shed some light on the sayings of *Thomas* that employ the term *μοναχός*.

### 7.1. Becoming *οὐα οὐωτ*

Thomasine sayings 4, 11, 22, 23, and 106 discuss being (or becoming) either *οὐα*, “one,” or *οὐα οὐωτ* (i.e. *οὐα ἵοϋωτ*),<sup>368</sup> “one and the same.” The most important and influential contribution to the discussion of the Thomasine motif of becoming one was offered by Klijn in his 1962 article. Although this article was published more than half a century ago, contemporary scholars often refer to it with approval.<sup>369</sup> It is thus worth opening this chapter with an analysis of Klijn’s hypothesis.

#### 7.1.1. A Critique of Klijn’s Hypothesis

According to Klijn, these sayings preach “a return to the original state” of oneness, because they were “inspired by Jewish ideas about Adam, his fall and redemption.”<sup>370</sup> Thomasine theology rests, therefore, on a Jewish myth. According to this myth, Adam was initially one (i.e. androgynous), but then he became two (i.e. male and female). The division of Adam led to the fall, which means that salvation is possible only by regaining the original oneness.

This myth, as Klijn himself admits, is not attested in early Jewish sources. There are, however, several Nag Hammadi writings<sup>371</sup> that seem to be aware of the myth of Adam who was first an androgynous being and was later on divided, a process which led to the corruption of human nature. Still, as Klijn rightly points out, all these sources “miss the emphasis on Adam’s being originally one and having become two.”<sup>372</sup> It is this emphasis on oneness that Klijn attempted to explain in his contribution.

Klijn believes that the key to the Thomasine motif of becoming one is Philo. Philo was allegedly aware of the myth and conceived of oneness as human perfection. *Thomas* and Philo thus are “in striking agreement,” meaning that they must both have drawn “from the same sources.”<sup>373</sup> I am inclined to think that Klijn exaggerates the importance of Philo for the understanding of *Thomas*. There is no reason to think that Philo adhered to the myth of the androgynous Adam. According to Richard A. Baer, there is only one passage where Philo might be speaking about the androgyny of

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<sup>367</sup> Klijn 1962, 278.

<sup>368</sup> For the omission of ἵ- before prevocalic οὐ in NHC II, see Emmel 1981, 142.

<sup>369</sup> See, e.g., Patterson 1993, 152; DeConick 1996, 89.

<sup>370</sup> Klijn 1962, 275.

<sup>371</sup> See, e.g., Gos. Phil., NHC II 68.22–6 and 70.9–22.

<sup>372</sup> Klijn 1962, 276.

<sup>373</sup> Klijn 1962, 278.

Adam, *Opif.* 151–2. Due to the importance of this passage for the discussion, it is worth citing the passage in full:

But since no created thing is constant, and things mortal are necessarily liable to changes and reverses, it could not but be that the first man too should experience some ill fortune. And woman becomes for him the beginning of blameworthy life. For so long as he was by himself, as accorded with such solitude, he went on growing like to the world and like God (μέχρι μὲν γὰρ εἷς ἦν, ὡμοιοῦτο κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν κόσμῳ καὶ θεῷ), and receiving in his soul the impressions made by the nature of each, not all of these, but as many as one of mortal composition can find room for. But when woman too had been made (ἐπλάσθη), beholding a figure like his own and a kindred form, he was gladdened by the sight, and approached and greeted her. She, seeing no living thing more like herself than he, is filled with glee and shamefastly returns his greeting. Love supervenes, brings together and fits into one the divided halves, as it were, of a single living creature (ἔρως δ' ἐπιγενόμενος καθάπερ ἑνὸς ζώου διττὰ τμήματα διεσθηκότα συναγαγὼν εἰς ταῦτόν ἀρμόττεται), and sets up in each of them a desire for fellowship with the other with a view to the production of their like. And this desire begat likewise bodily pleasure, that pleasure which is the beginning of wrongs and violation of law, the pleasure for the sake of which they bring on themselves the life of mortality and wretchedness in lieu of that of immortality and bliss (trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, altered).

It is by no means evident that Philo speaks of Adam as an androgyne in this passage. First, it is noteworthy that he says that Eve was created (ἐπλάσθη), not that androgynous Adam became male and female. Second, as Richard A. Baer points out, “logically it is difficult to see how the androgynous man motif, if understood literally, could fit into Philo’s schema.”<sup>374</sup>

Admittedly, this passage is “strongly reminiscent of Plato’s myth of the androgynous man” (see *Symp.* 189c–193d).<sup>375</sup> I am, however, inclined to agree with David T. Runia that Philo calls Adam and Eve διττὰ τμήματα διεσθηκότα, “two separated pieces,” figuratively, in order to highlight “the powerful attraction that love brings about” by alluding to Plato’s famous dialogue (cf. *Symp.* 191d–e).<sup>376</sup> It is hard to believe that Philo here seriously adheres to the doctrine that he elsewhere calls τὰ τῶν μύθων πλάσματα, “mythical fictions” (*Contempl.* 63).

More importantly, neither here nor elsewhere does Philo describe salvation as the return to an androgynous or asexual state. In fact, as Baer notes, “Philo nowhere speaks of a return to the androgynous state of the πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος as the goal toward which one is to strive.”<sup>377</sup> Philo used the categories of male and female in several different ways, but when he used sexual imagery to describe progress in the moral and religious life, he described it as becoming male. This gendered approach to ethical and religious mores is “directly related to Philo’s practice of associating the sense-perceptible sphere with woman and the female, whereas the realm of the rational soul is male and is symbolized by the man.”<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Baer 1970, 88.

<sup>375</sup> Baer 1970, 38; cf. Runia 2001, 357–8.

<sup>376</sup> Runia 2001, 358.

<sup>377</sup> Baer 1970, 72.

<sup>378</sup> Baer 1970, 48.

To sum up, even though Philo most definitely believed that achieving the ideal state meant becoming one (the relevant passages are cited below in section 7.1.3), he did not understand becoming one as becoming an androgyne. In what follows, I will argue that both the Philonic and the Thomasine fondness of oneness come from the Platonist rather than the Jewish tradition.

I proceed to a discussion of the myth of the androgynous Adam in *Thomas*. Although, as I have tried to argue, Philo's idea of human perfection does not have much to do with this myth, it is possible that the Thomasine theology is nonetheless indebted to it.

*Thomas* mentions Adam by name twice (sayings 46 and 85), and there is no doubt that the stories about Adam were among the sources for the theology of *Thomas*. Nothing prevents us from assuming that there was a myth about Adam being male and female at the time of the composition of *Thomas*. In fact, there seem to be two Thomasine sayings that may allude to such a myth. One of them (*Thomas* 11:4) speaks about "one" becoming "two"; another (*Thomas* 22) speaks about "two" becoming "one." I begin with the former passage:

11:4 ὁ μὴ φθογ̃ ἐτετῆνο̃ νοῦα ἀτετῆειρε̃ ἡπснаγ̃ ροταν̃ δε̃ ἐτετῆναδωπε̃ ἡснаγ̃ οὐ πε̃  
ἐτετῆναδω

11:4 On the day you were one, you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?

It is possible that when Jesus refers to the state of being "one," he refers to primordial humanity embodied in the androgynous protoplast; it is also possible that his reference to becoming "two" signifies the division of the protoplast into a man and a woman. Yet since the saying is formulated in quite an obscure fashion, a wide variety of alternative interpretations can be offered.

For instance, Uwe-Karsten Plisch thinks that the saying seeks to answer the following question: "What is the use and meaning of a union between a man and a woman in light of the rapidly approaching end of the world?"<sup>379</sup> According to Plisch, the day of becoming two is the wedding day, when "husband and wife merge into one flesh but also establish the duality of their partnership." In this case, the last question of the saying "has to be understood as a critical request."<sup>380</sup>

I would not go as far as to insist on the interpretation suggested by Plisch; it might very well be that the author of *Thomas* 11:4 did intend to allude to the myth of androgynous Adam. What is fairly certain, however, is that the phrasing of this saying is intentionally vague. The only thing that the reader may be confident about is that oneness is of great value and that its loss is to be avoided. It seems that this saying is, at the very least, not only about Adam.

The other saying that may allude to the myth of the androgynous protoplast is *Thomas* 22. In this saying, Jesus gives the commandment to "make the two into one" (*Thomas* 22:4) and "to make the male and the female into a single one" (*Thomas* 22:5). He also says that there is a resemblance between little children and those who enter the kingdom (*Thomas* 22:2) and that, in order to enter the kingdom, one needs to make "an image instead of an image" (*Thomas* 22:6).

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<sup>379</sup> Plisch 2008, 59–60.

<sup>380</sup> Plisch 2008, 60.



It is possible that *Thomas* 22:2 and 22:6 reflect certain traditions about Adam. First, a number of early Christian authors claim that Adam was a child when he was in the Paradise;<sup>381</sup> hence, it is possible that *Thomas* 22:2 refers to the return to the prelapsarian condition of the protoplast. Second, the difficult phrase οὐγκῶν ἐπιμα ἡογκῶ(ν), “an image instead of an image,”<sup>382</sup> (*Thomas* 22:6) seems to allude to the Genesis narrative, where God first creates Adam κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ (Gen 1:26–7 and 5:1 LXX), and then Adam begets Seth κατὰ τὴν ἰδέαν αὐτοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ (Gen 5:3). Thus, according to *Thomas* 22:6, s/he who wishes to enter the kingdom has to transform “the image of Adam” into “the image of God.”<sup>383</sup> It seems that the same motif is present in 1 Cor 15:49, where Paul speaks about carrying ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ ἐπουρανίου (i.e. of Christ) instead of ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ χοίκοῦ (i.e. of Adam).<sup>384</sup>

If *Thomas* 22:2 and 22:6 allude to the stories of Adam, it is possible that *Thomas* 22:5 alludes to such a story as well. It is thus possible that “to make the male and the female into a single one” refers to an androgynous Adam in Paradise. Whether regaining primordial androgyny (*Thomas* 22:5) is identical to becoming one (*Thomas* 22:4) is, however, another issue. As I will demonstrate in section 7.2.2, there are good reasons to doubt whether *Thomas* 22:5 is a paraphrase or an explicative definition of *Thomas* 22:4. The myth of Adam is, at the very least, not the only thing that *Thomas* 22 revolves around.

The conclusion I reach is, therefore, twofold. On the one hand, it cannot be ruled out that some of the Thomasine sayings that promote oneness allude to the myth of an androgynous Adam. On the other hand, it would be quite unfair to the author(s) of these sayings to reduce the motif of oneness to the myth of Adam, especially since their allusions to Adam, even if present, are remarkably vague. But perhaps these sayings were intentionally formulated in an ambiguous way. It seems, at any rate, that the author(s) gave the abstract idea of oneness preference over the mythical story of the androgynous protoplast.

<sup>381</sup> See Theophilus, *Autol.* 2.25; Irenaeus, *Dem. ap. praed.* 12; 14; *Haer.* 3.22.4; 3.23.5; 4.38.1–2; Clement, *Protr.* 11.111.1. Cf. DeConick and Fossum 1991, 134–5; Murray 2004, 304–5.

<sup>382</sup> According to Plisch 2008, 86, since this phrase comes after Jesus’ command to replace the eyes, hands, and feet, οὐγκῶν “must also refer to a body part.” In support of this proposal, the Berliner Arbeitskreis (see Aland 1997, 526) refers to Acts Pet. 12 Apos. NHC VI 2.24, where the context does suggest that οὐγκῶν means “face.” Schenke 2003, 424, cites a Eucharistic prayer in Sahidic (see Quecke 1971; Quecke 1974; see also Henner 2000, 6–8) as another example of οὐγκῶν meaning “face.” Schenke’s suggestion, however, is hardly warranted, since the relevant passage of the prayer, οὐγκῶν ἡπεῖατῆαγ ἐροϋ is in fact an allusion to “the image of the invisible God” (εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου) of Col 1:15 (cf. Crum 1902, 2) and, therefore, can hardly mean anything other than “the image of this invisible one.” Thus, Acts Pet. 12 Apos. NHC VI 2.24 appears to be the only text where οὐγκῶν possibly means “face,” making the proposal of the Berliner Arbeitskreis highly problematic. It is also worth noting that the closest parallel to the Thomasine expression οὐγκῶν ἐπιμα ἡογκῶν, the passage from the Letter of Peter to Philip (see the following footnote), clearly refers to images, not faces.

<sup>383</sup> The Letter of Peter to Philip uses the expression “an image instead of an image” to describe the reverse process: the demiurge (μαγῶαλῆς, “the arrogant one”) tries to create an imitation of the image of the divine being and makes “an image instead of an image” (Tchacos 4.16: οὐγκῶν ἀντ’ οὐγκῶν; NHC VIII 136.9: οὐγκῶν ἐπιμα ἡογκῶν). See Meyer 1981, 128.

<sup>384</sup> See Fitzmyer 2008, 599–600; Collins 1999, 572.

### 7.1.2. Becoming Asexual?

One of the Thomasine sayings that promotes oneness, *Thomas 22*, also promotes the annulment of gender. It is reasonable to ask whether “becoming one” is just an extravagant way to express the idea of becoming asexual. In what follows I will argue that it is not the case.

22:1 αἰς ναγ ἀρῆκογῆι ἐγχι ἐρωτε 22:2 πεχαγ ἡνεμααθητης δε νεεικογῆι ἐγχι ἐρωτε  
ἐγτῆτων ἀνετβοκ ἐρογν ἀτῆῆερο 22:3 πεχαγ ναγ δε εειενο ἡκογῆι τῆναβωκ ἐρογν  
ἐτῆῆερο 22:4 πεχε ις ναγ δε ροταν ἐτετῆῆαρ πснаγ ογὰ ἀγω ἐτετῆῆαρ πса нρογн ἡθε  
ἡпса нвол ἀγω пса ἡвол ἡθε ἡпса ἡρογн ἀγω пса (н)тпе ἡθε ἡпса ἡптῆ 22:5 ἀγω ψινα  
ἐτετῆῆαιρε ἡφογт ἡῆ τсгime ἡπιογὰ ογωт δεкаас не φоогт ῖ ρоогт ἡте тсгime ῖ сгime 22:6  
ροταν ἐτετῆῆαιρε ἡρῆβαλ епма ἡογβαλ ἀγω ογсix епма ἡноγсix ἀγω оγερнте епма  
ἡογερнте оγгикωн епма ἡоггикω(н) 22:7 тоте тетнабωк ἐρογн ε[т]ῆ[тер]о

22:1 Jesus saw little (children) being nursed. 22:2 He said to his disciples: “These little ones being nursed are like those who enter the kingdom.” 22:3 They said to him: “Will we enter the kingdom as little ones?” 22:4 Jesus said to them: “When you make the two into one and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below,— 22:5 that is, to make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will no longer be male and the female no longer female— 22:6 and when you make eyes instead of an eye and a hand instead of a hand and a foot instead of a foot, (and) an image instead of an image, 22:7 then you will enter [the kingdom]”.

One of the problems an interpreter of this saying has to face is the connection between its first and second parts; in other words, how is becoming like a child in *Thomas 22:1–3* related to the various requirements listed in *Thomas 22:4–7*? According to Plisch, while *Thomas 22:1–3* praises the infants for their “not-yet-gender,” *Thomas 22:4–7* describes the “transformation of a binary gender into a unitary (non-)gender.”<sup>385</sup> Plisch builds his case on the assumption that *Thomas 22:5* identifies becoming one with the annulment of gender.

It is noteworthy that Plisch makes a reservation that this identification is made “via a rather awkwardly inserted syntactic element.”<sup>386</sup> Indeed, it is quite difficult to make sense of the Coptic text in this sentence. *Thomas 22:5* starts with the words ἀγω ψινα ἐτετῆῆαιρε (“and in order that you make”), where ἀγω ψινα most probably renders καὶ ἵνα of the Greek Vorlage. The hypothesis that underlies the translation of the Berliner Arbeitskreis is that *Thomas 22:5* was introduced by an exegetical καὶ<sup>387</sup> in the Greek Vorlage and then specified the purpose of the actions described in *Thomas 22:4*.

This interpretation is problematic for several reasons. First, it is doubtful that an exegetical καὶ can introduce a final clause (τοῦτ’ ἔστιν would be more suitable for this purpose). Plisch offers

<sup>385</sup> Plisch 2008, 86.

<sup>386</sup> Plisch 2008, 86.

<sup>387</sup> For examples of exegetical (or explicative) καὶ in the New Testament, see BDAG, s.v. καὶ (1.c); for a discussion of this grammatical phenomenon in papyri, see Ljungvik 1932, 57–9; Mayser 1934, 141.

only one example where, as he claims, *καὶ ἵνα* can be used in the same way as in *Thomas* 22:5, viz. Barn. 12:2.<sup>388</sup>

*Λέγει δὲ πάλιν τῷ Μωϋσῇ, πολεμουμένου τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀλλοφύλων, καὶ ἵνα ὑπομνήσῃ αὐτοὺς πολεμουμένους, ὅτι διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθησαν εἰς θάνατον· λέγει εἰς τὴν καρδίαν Μωϋσέως τὸ πνεῦμα, ἵνα ποιήσῃ τύπον σταυροῦ καὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος πάσχειν, ὅτι ἐὰν μή, φησὶν, ἐλπίσωσιν ἐπ' αὐτῷ, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα πολεμηθήσονται.*

When Israel is attacked by a foreign people, he again speaks to Moses to remind them, the ones who are attacked, that they are being handed over to death because of their sins. The Spirit speaks to the heart of Moses that he should make a type of the cross and of the one who was about to suffer, that they might realize, he says, that if they refused to hope in him, they would be attacked forever (trans. B. D. Ehrman, altered).

The clause introduced by *ἵνα* neither explains nor particularizes the preceding text, so it is hardly the case that *καὶ* is exegetical and that we should translate *λέγει ... καὶ ἵνα ὑπομνήσῃ* “he speaks..., that is, to remind.” The quoted passage clearly follows a parallel structure, as both sentences therein follow the same pattern: *λέγει ... ἵνα ... ὅτι*. It thus seems logical to suggest that *καὶ ἵνα* in the first sentence and *ἵνα* in the second sentence have the same function. While the function of *καὶ*, on the other hand, in *καὶ ἵνα* is debatable, I would suggest that it is stylistic: the participle *πολεμουμένος* occurs twice in this passage, and it is likely that *καὶ* is used to emphasize that repetition. Thus, Plisch’s only example of *ἵνα* preceded by an exegetical *καὶ* does not seem to hold up under scrutiny.

Another problem with Plisch’s interpretation is that it does not seem to do justice to *Thomas* 22:4–5. Let us, for the sake of argument, accept the translation offered by the Berliner Arbeitskreis and try to make sense of the idea that Jesus identifies becoming one with becoming asexual by encouraging the disciples to “make the two into one” in order to “make the male and the female into a single one.” The verb *εἶπε* with the conditional conjugation base is repeated twice in *Thomas* 22:4. Grammatically, *οἷμα* in *Thomas* 22:5 must qualify either the second conditional clause, or both of them. In either case, it is necessary to explain why Jesus says that, in order to blend maleness with femaleness, one should “make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below.” Plisch does not address this question in particular, so I will need to improvise.

It is possible that Jesus’ advice to “make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside” refers to the genitalia. According to Galen, there is no difference between male and female body, except that there are certain organs inside the bodies of women, but outside the bodies of men: *ἃ γὰρ ἔνδον ταῖς γυναιξί, ταῦτ' ἔξω τοῖς ἀνδράσιν* (*Us. part.* 14.6 = 4.160 Kühn = 2.297 Helmreich).

The problem with this interpretation is that it would not seem to address how one can make “the above like the below.” I do not understand how this prescription could be related to the annulment of gender and am inclined to think that the whole phrase “make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below” expresses an abstract idea of the elimination of opposites. It is, therefore, quite similar to what we encounter in the apocryphal acts, e.g. “Unless you make the things on the right as the things on the left and the things on the left as the things on the

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<sup>388</sup> Plisch 2008, 87.

right, the things above as the things below, and the things behind as the things in front, you will not recognize the kingdom” (Acts Pet. 38:8; trans. R. F. Stoops).

Since the translation by the Berliner Arbeitskreis is problematic, I would like to offer a few alternative ones. The first two proposals are based on the assumption that the structure of *Thomas* 22 is elliptic: *ϥινα* introduces a subordinate clause that depends on a main clause, which has to be supplied. According to the third proposal, *ϥινα* is used imperatively and introduces a main clause.<sup>389</sup>

(1) The first possible solution is to surmise that *Thomas* 22:4–5 and *Thomas* 22:6–7 are two independent sentences. The second sentence consists of one subordinate clause introduced by *ϥοταν* and one main clause introduced by *τοτε*. The first sentence consists of two subordinate clauses—one introduced by *ϥοταν* and another one by *ϥινα*—and one unexpressed (elliptical) main clause—*τετναβωκ ερουν ετμηντερο*, “you will enter the kingdom”—that can be easily inferred from *Thomas* 22:1–3. Hence, the translation by the Berliner Arbeitskreis should be altered as follows:

22:1 Jesus saw little (children) being nursed. 22:2 He said to his disciples: “These little ones being nursed are like those who enter the kingdom.” 22:3 They said to him: “Will we enter the kingdom as little ones?” 22:4 Jesus said to them: “**(You will enter the kingdom)** when you make the two into one and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below 22:5 and **(you will enter the kingdom)** in order to make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will no longer be male and the female no longer female. 22:6 **When** you make eyes instead of an eye and a hand instead of a hand and a foot instead of a foot, (and) an image instead of an image, 22:7 then you will enter [the kingdom]”.

A very similar ellipsis is present in *Thomas* 60:3. This sentence consists of one subordinated clause introduced by *δεκαας* and one main elliptical clause inferred from *Thomas* 60:2:

60:2 *πεχαρ ηνεφναοητης δε πη ηπκωτε ηπεριειν* 60:3 *πεχαρ ναρ δεκαας εφναοιγτq ηφογομq*

60:2 He said to his disciples: “That (man) is pursuing the lamb.”<sup>390</sup> 60:3 They said to him: “So that he may kill it (and) eat it.”

If this understanding of *Thomas* 22 is correct, then Jesus does not say that to make “the two into one” and to make “the male and the female into a single one” are the same thing, but rather that these actions are two different stages of the process of salvation. *Thomas* 22:4 lists numerous requirements that have to be met in order to enter the kingdom, and *Thomas* 22:5 subsequently describes what happens after one enters. In order to enter the kingdom, one should work on the elimination of

<sup>389</sup> Another possible, though less preferable, way to deal with the problem is to assume that the text is corrupt. According to the Berliner Arbeitskreis, it is possible that a certain part of the saying was accidentally omitted by a copyist. See Aland 1997, 526.

<sup>390</sup> According to the suggestion of the Berliner Arbeitskreis, *ηπκωτε η-* is an erroneous (or rather too literal) rendering of the Greek expression *εἰμι περί τι* (LSJ, s.v. *εἰμι* [C.IV.6]: “to be engaged in”). See Bethge 1998, 48; Plisch 1999, 527–8.

opposites, and the outcome or consequence of entering the kingdom is becoming asexual. The problem with this translation is that it implies that entering the kingdom is not the last stage of one's salvation, which seems to contradict the other Thomasine sayings (see, e.g., *Thomas* 27 and 49).

(2) Another option is that  $\alpha\upsilon\iota\alpha$  in *Thomas* 22:5 is used elliptically or, in other words, that  $\alpha\upsilon\iota\alpha$  qualifies a clause that is not expressed. A similar usage for  $\text{ἵνα}$  can be found in a number of early Christian texts, e.g. Barn. 7:5 and Herm. Sim. 8.6.1 (72:1).<sup>391</sup> The phrase to be supplied may be  $\text{ἐγὼ ἔφημι ὑμῖν}$ , “I tell you.”<sup>392</sup> In this case, *Thomas* 22:5 would be an independent sentence that is sandwiched between two subordinate clauses introduced by  $\text{ὅταν}$ .

22:1 Jesus saw little (children) being nursed. 22:2 He said to his disciples: “These little ones being nursed are like those who enter the kingdom.” 22:3 They said to him: “Will we enter the kingdom as little ones?” 22:4 Jesus said to them: “When you make the two into one and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below— 22:5 **and (I tell you)** to make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will no longer be male and the female no longer female— 22:6 (and) when you make eyes instead of an eye and a hand instead of a hand and a foot instead of a foot, (and) an image instead of an image, 22:7 then you will enter [the kingdom]”.

While this understanding of *Thomas* 22:5 makes the saying intelligible, it is still open to criticism, since, in the case of an elliptical construction, the choice of the main clause to be supplied will always remain a matter of personal judgment.

(3) The most satisfactory solution to the problem is to suggest that  $\text{ἵνα}$  in *Thomas* 22:5 is used imperatively. The imperatival use of  $\text{ἵνα}$  is attested not only in the New Testament (see especially Eph 5:33),<sup>393</sup> but also in early Jewish (2 Macc 1:9) and classical (Epictetus, *Diss.* 4.1.41; Marcus Aurelius, *Medit.* 11.4) texts.<sup>394</sup> The verb introduced by  $\text{ἵνα}$  is therefore equivalent to the imperative.

22:1 Jesus saw little (children) being nursed. 22:2 He said to his disciples: “These little ones being nursed are like those who enter the kingdom.” 22:3 They said to him: “Will we enter the kingdom as little ones?” 22:4 Jesus said to them: “When you make the two into one and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside and the above like the below— 22:5 **and make** the male and the female into a single one, so that the male will no longer be male and the female no longer female— 22:6 (and) when you make eyes instead of an eye and a hand instead of a hand and a foot instead of a foot, (and) an image instead of an image, 22:7 then you will enter [the kingdom]”.

<sup>391</sup> These examples are from Blass, Debrunner, and Funk 1961, 247 and 255–6. See also the examples from classical literature in LSJ, 830 (s.v.  $\text{ἵνα}$  [B.II.3.a]; correct “D. [=Demosthenes] 45.5” to “D. 24.14”).

<sup>392</sup> The Berliner Arbeitskreis supplies  $\text{καί}$  (understood as a recitative  $\text{ἐνι}$ ) in *Thomas* 114:3 with the same expression. See Bethge 1998, 50; Plisch 1999, 528.

<sup>393</sup> See Zerwick and Smith 1963, 141–2 (§415); Blass, Debrunner, and Funk 1961, 195–6 (§387).

<sup>394</sup> These examples are from Cadoux 1941, 166; see also LSJ, s.v.  $\text{ἵνα}$  (B.II.3.b).

According to this interpretation, there are two main conditions for entering the kingdom: the elimination of opposites (22:4) and the replacement of body parts and images (22:6). There is, however, a third condition—the annulment of gender (22:5)—and quite an important condition at that. *Thomas* 22:5 seems to explain how the general rule described in 22:4 may be applied to a particular domain of human life, i.e. to sexuality. Since sexuality is given special attention, it is certainly of great importance to the author of the saying. The annulment of gender is nevertheless only an important example of becoming one. And an exemplary should never be confused with the entirety.

The whole saying might, then, be interpreted as follows. In *Thomas* 22:2, Jesus says that there is a resemblance between little children and those who enter the kingdom. I am inclined to agree with Plisch that the infants of *Thomas* 22:2 exemplify asexual beings.<sup>395</sup> The disciples, however, take his words literally (*Thomas* 22:3).<sup>396</sup> In order to correct them, Jesus lists a number of things one must do in order to enter the kingdom. According to him, the main requirement is to become one through the elimination of opposites (*Thomas* 22:4).

Having established this ground rule, Jesus then explains his opening remark: since the quality of being male or female constitutes an important pair of opposites, one should seek to regain the asexuality of an infant (*Thomas* 22:5). The grammar of *Thomas* 22:5 is not “awkward,” but it does disturb the flow of the text. Perhaps we should see it instead as an attempt to highlight *Thomas* 22:5 as a link between *Thomas* 22:1–3 and *Thomas* 22:4–7.

After this interlude, Jesus exhorts the replacement of body parts (“hand,” “foot,” and “eye”) and “images” (*Thomas* 22:6). As Plisch points out, the list of the body parts in *Thomas* 22:6 is the same as in Mark 9:43–7.<sup>397</sup> Although the meaning of this Markan passage is debatable, I find the following interpretation by Joel Marcus to be the most appealing:

As in many biblical contexts ... the *hand* is the instrument for the commission of sin, the *foot* is the means of transport to the place of its commission, and the *eye* is the means by which the temptation to commit it enters in.<sup>398</sup>

It seems reasonable to surmise that *Thomas* employs this list of body parts in the same vein as Mark; it is thus possible that “hand,” “foot,” and “eye” stand metonymically for the inner impulses that can lead an individual astray. As for the command to replace the “images,” this may refer to the restitution of God’s image (see section 7.1.1). What is important for the present discussion is that *Thomas* 22:6, just like *Thomas* 22:4, seems to describe a transformation that is different from the one described in *Thomas* 22:5. While becoming asexual is important (*Thomas* 22:5), there is much more that has to be done (*Thomas* 22:4 and 22:6).

It is clear that to make “the two into one” and to make “the male and the female into a single one” are not the same. *Thomas* 22:5 does not explicate the purpose of what is described in *Thomas*

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<sup>395</sup> It should be noted, however, that a few alternative suggestions can be offered. In a paper presented at the 2013 Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting at St. Andrews, Scotland, Calogero A. Miceli argued that the emphasis in *Thomas* 22:2 is on the fact that the infants are being nourished (κτὶ ἐπαρτε, “take milk”). If this is the case, the simile probably refers to receiving and “ingesting” Jesus’ teaching; the content of this teaching is then explicated in *Thomas* 22:4–7.

<sup>396</sup> As Miceli points out in his paper (see previous note), the misunderstanding of the disciples in *Thomas* 22:3 is quite similar to the story of Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3:1–9. Cf. Plisch 2008, 85–6.

<sup>397</sup> See Plisch 2008, 86.

<sup>398</sup> Marcus 2009, 697.

22:4. The relationship of what is described in these two sentences is rather that of genus and species. This claim can also be validated by the fact that *Thomas* 22:4–7 constitutes a doublet with *Thomas* 106:1:

106:1 πεχε ιϭ̅ χε ροταν ετετηϭαρ̅ πcναγ̅ ογα̅ τετναϭωπε̅ ν̅ωηρε̅ ἡ̅πρωμε̅

106:1 Jesus says: “When you make the two into one, you will become sons of man.”

As Jón Ma. Ásgeirsson puts it, doublets are “a typical device of rhetorical progression.”<sup>399</sup> Sometimes the sayings of a doublet are identical, which means that a saying is merely recited (as in *Thomas* 56 and 80), but more often than not a saying becomes either augmented or condensed. Hence, according to Ásgeirsson, *Thomas* 22:4–7 and *Thomas* 106:1 are respectively the augmented and condensed versions of the same saying.<sup>400</sup>

If Ásgeirsson is correct and *Thomas* 106:1 summarizes what is said in *Thomas* 22:4–7, it is then noteworthy that the summary does not deal with sexual imagery, but rather repeats the abstract exhortation to make the two into one. “The two” here is by no means confined to the categories of male and female; it may refer to any binary opposition. Importantly, whoever wrote the summary was more interested in oneness than in asexuality.

That becoming one implies the elimination of all possible opposition is also clear from *Thomas* 4:2–3. This saying does not associate oneness with becoming asexual, but rather with becoming neither first nor last:

*Thomas* 4:2–3 (P.Oxy. 654)

*Thomas* 4:2–3 (NHC II)

4:2a ὅτι πολλοὶ ἔσονται π[ρῶτοι ἔσχατοι]

4:2a χε ογν̅ ραρ̅ ν̅ωορη̅ ναρ̅ ραρ̅

4:2b [καὶ] οἱ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι

4:3 καὶ [εἰς ἓν καταντήσου]σιν<sup>401</sup>

4:3 αγω̅ ν̅σεϭωπε̅ ογα̅ ογωτ̅

4:2a For many who are [first] will be [last,]

4:2a For many who are first will be last.

4:2b [and] the last will be first,

4:3 and [they will become one].

4:3 And they will become a single one.<sup>402</sup>

<sup>399</sup> Ásgeirsson 1997, 57.

<sup>400</sup> See Ásgeirsson 1997, 78–9; Ásgeirsson 1998, 328.

<sup>401</sup> The restoration of the lacuna in P.Oxy. 654.26 with [εἰς ἓν καταντήσου]σιν was suggested in Marcovich 1988, 63–4. Surprisingly, the Berliner Arbeitskreis and April DeConick follow the suggestion of Otfried Hofius, restoring the lacuna with [εἰς γενήσου]σιν (see Hofius 1960, 32; Aland 1997, 520; DeConick 2007, 58–9). Needless to say, this restoration is impossible, since γίνομαι is a deponent verb.

<sup>402</sup> It is worth noting that *Thomas* 4:2b is omitted in the Coptic version. Given that the version of the saying about the first and the last preserved in the Greek *Thomas* is identical with the version preserved in the Synoptics (see, e.g., Mark 10:31), it seems fairly obvious that the omission of *Thomas* 4:2b in the Coptic version is secondary; cf. Plisch 2008, 45–6.

It is worth noting that *Thomas* 22 is the only saying that mentions the annulment of gender as a particular example of becoming one. It is quite striking how often the motif of becoming one occurs in *Thomas*, but it is also striking that, unlike saying 22, sayings 4, 11, 23, and 106 formulated the notion of becoming one in abstract categories. The only ancient tradition that has the same obsession with the abstract idea of oneness is Platonism. I thus believe that it is, again, against the Platonist background that the Thomasine motif of becoming one should be analyzed.

### 7.1.3. Platonists on Becoming One

According to James Adam, the phrase εἷς ἐκ πολλῶν “is a sort of Platonic motto or text.”<sup>403</sup> Plato uses the expression twice in *Respublica*. In one of the passages (443d–e), Socrates discusses justice, pointing out that a just person is one who is able to make peace between the rational (τὸ λογιστικόν), the appetitive (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν), and the spirited (τὸ θυμοειδής) parts of the human soul:

One who is just does not allow any part of himself to do the work of another part or allow the various classes within him to meddle with each other. He regulates well what is really his own and rules himself. He puts himself in order, is his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts of himself like three limiting notes in a musical scale—high, low, and middle. He binds together those parts and any others there may be in between, and from having been many things he becomes entirely one (παντάπασιν εἷς γενόμενος ἐκ πολλῶν), moderate and harmonious (trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve).

In another passage (423 c–d), Socrates explores the question of the ideal size of a city, arguing that it is important for the city (ἡ πόλις) to be in unity (μία). Such an objective can be achieved, if all groups of the city, just like the three parts of the human soul, are put in the right order and if all citizens commit to their roles in society. One person should perform one task appropriate to him or her. If this is the case, then such a person comes into unity, and the city of unities becomes a unity in itself. Becoming one is, therefore, not only an anthropological but also a social ideal:

This was meant to make clear that each of the other citizens is to be directed to what he is naturally suited for (πρὸς ὃ τις πέφυκεν, πρὸς τοῦτο ἓνα πρὸς ἓν ἕκαστον ἔργον δεῖ κομίζειν), so that, doing the one work that is his own, he will become not many but one (ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ ἐπιτηδεύων ἕκαστος μὴ πολλοὶ ἀλλ’ εἷς γίγνηται), and the whole city will itself be naturally one not many (σύμπασα ἡ πόλις μία φύηται ἀλλὰ μὴ πολλαί) (trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve).

This motif was further developed by the Platonists of the Old Academy. Philip of Opus in the *Epinomis* maintains that he who contemplates the cosmos is one and obtains the wisdom that is also one (986c–d). Moreover, in Philip’s thought, becoming one takes on an eschatological meaning;

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<sup>403</sup> Adam 1963, 1:264.



perfect unity is something a wise man can hope for after he dies, because, as Leonardo Tarán puts it, “in this life we continue to be disturbed by our manifold perceptions”.<sup>404</sup>

I maintain also, both in jest and in earnest, that when any of these people fulfills his destiny by dying (if indeed he still exists in death), he will no longer be affected by a multitude of perceptions as he is now but will participate in a destiny of unity. Having become one from many (μῖς τε μοίρας μετεκληφώς μόνος καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν εἷς γεγονώς), he will be happy, most wise, and blessed—whether in his blessed state he dwells on continents<sup>405</sup> or islands [the Isles of the Blest]—and he will enjoy this fortune forever (992b; trans. R.D. McKirahan).

The next ancient author who knew of the idea of becoming one is Philo. The interpretation of Philo is crucial for the assessment of Klijn’s argument. As the cited below passages show, Philo’s speculations about becoming one are very similar to the thoughts of the other philosophers quoted in this survey, which means that, in this instance, Philo does not bear witness to a Jewish myth, but rather thinks as a Platonist.

The term Philo usually employs to express the idea of oneness is μονάς, “monad.” Contrary to what Klijn says in his article,<sup>406</sup> Philo does not claim that God is a monad,<sup>407</sup> but rather that he precedes the monad (*Praem.* 40), being more ancient than it (*Contempl.* 2). As Philo puts it, “the ‘one’ and the ‘monad’ are, therefore, the only standard for determining the category to which God belongs. Or, rather, the One God is the sole standard for the ‘monad’ (τέτακται οὖν ὁ θεὸς κατὰ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὴν μονάδα, μᾶλλον δὲ ἡ μονάς κατὰ τὸν ἓνα θεόν)” (*Leg.* 2.3; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, slightly altered).

According to Philo, μονάς is ἀσώματος θεοῦ εἰκὼν (*Spec.* 2.176; cf. 3.180), while δυάς is the image of divisible matter (διαμετρήτης ὕλης, sc. εἰκὼν). The monad represents God, the creator of the universe, while the dyad represents passive matter and creation (*Spec.* 3.180; *Praem.* 46; *Somn.* 2.70).

Therefore, since the monad is the image of God, to become a monad would mean to become like God. It would certainly be an extraordinary achievement, since, as Philo contends in *Leg.* 2.1–2, while God is always one, a human being is always many:

ὁ θεὸς μόνος ἐστὶ καὶ ἓν, οὐ σύγκριμα, φύσις ἀπλή, ἡμῶν δ’ ἕκαστος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσα γέγονε πολλά· οἷον ἐγὼ πολλά εἰμι, ψυχὴ σῶμα, καὶ ψυχῆς ἄλογον λογικόν, πάλιν σώματος θερμὸν ψυχρὸν βαρὺ κοῦφον ξηρὸν ὑγρόν· ὁ δὲ θεὸς οὐ σύγκριμα οὐδὲ ἐκ πολλῶν συνεστώς, ἀλλ’ ἀμιγῆς ἅλλω.

God is, alone, a Unity, in the sense that His nature is simple not composite, whereas each one of us and of all other created beings is made up of many things. I, for example, am many things

<sup>404</sup> Tarán 1975, 349.

<sup>405</sup> The notion that the blessed ones dwell on continents probably comes from the myth Plato narrates in *Phaedo*. See Tarán 1975, 349–50.

<sup>406</sup> Klijn 1962, 276.

<sup>407</sup> For this view, see Xenocrates, fr. 15 Heinze = fr. 213 Isnardi Parente: the monad (ἡ μονάς) is the first god (πρῶτος θεός); see also Numenius, fr. 52 des Places = Calcidius, *Comm. Tim.* 295: God (deus, i.e. “the first god,” ὁ πρῶτος θεός) is “singularity” (singularitas, i.e. μονάς); cf. van Winden 1959, 106–7.

in one. I am soul and body. To soul belong rational and irrational parts, and to body, again, different properties, warm and cold, heavy and light, dry and moist. But God is not a composite Being, consisting of many parts, nor is He mixed with aught else (*Leg.* 2.2; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

Thus, we are many because we are composite: each human individual consists of a body and a bipartite soul. To become a monad would mean to cease being a composite being. Only one person in the history of the people of Israel was able to do so. According to Philo's *Mos.* 2.288, Moses as a human being was once a dyad (δυάς), composed of a soul and a body, but afterwards was transformed by God into a mind (νοῦς), thus becoming a monad (μονάς):<sup>408</sup>

Afterwards the time came when he had to make his pilgrimage from earth to heaven, and to leave this mortal life for immortality, summoned thither by the Father who resolved his twofold nature of soul and body into a single unity (ὃς αὐτὸν δυάδα ὄντα, σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν, εἰς μονάδος ἀνεστοιχείου), transforming his whole being into mind, pure as the sunlight (εἰς νοῦν ἡλιοειδέστατον) (trans. F. H. Colson).

A comment on the Platonist background of this passage seems to be in order. To encounter the notion that νοῦς is a monad in a Middle Platonist treatise is by no means surprising (see, e.g., Theon of Smyrna, *Util. math.* 98.1–2 Hiller). It seems that this notion goes back to Xenocrates, a famous pupil of Plato's, who claimed that the monad (ἡ μονάς), the primary divine principle, was νοῦς (fr. 15 Heinze = fr. 213 Isnardi Parente).<sup>409</sup> Moreover, it is sometimes assumed that, in his lost dialogue *De philosophia* (fr. 11 Ross = *De an.* 404b22), Aristotle ascribed a similar view (τὸ ἓν is νοῦς) to Plato himself,<sup>410</sup> though it is probable that, as Harold Cherniss argued,<sup>411</sup> this Aristotelian testimony is in fact a report of Xenocrates' doctrine.<sup>412</sup>

Be that as it may, it is clear that Philo describes the transformation of Moses in Platonist terms. Other historical figures were not as advanced as Moses, even though some of them came quite close. In *Opif.* 151 (cited in section 7.1.1), Philo says that as long as Adam was one (εἷς) he was like the world and God in his singleness (κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν).<sup>413</sup> Philo borrows the expression κατὰ τὴν μόνωσιν from *Tim.* 31a, where Plato states that the demiurge created only one cosmos in order to make it like him in its singleness. As David T. Runia points out, in so doing Philo adapts Plato's doctrine of

<sup>408</sup> Cf. a similar passage in *QG* 2.29.

<sup>409</sup> See Dillon 2003, 107.

<sup>410</sup> See, e.g., Gaiser 1963, 44–6.

<sup>411</sup> Cherniss 1944, 565–80 and Cherniss 1977, 423–38.

<sup>412</sup> Surprisingly enough, in another lost work, *De Pythagoreis* (fr. 13 Ross = Alexander, *Comm. Metaph.* 39.13–15 Hayduck; on the attribution of this passage to Aristotle, see Wilpert 1940, 372), Aristotle ascribes the view that τὸ ἓν is νοῦς to the Pythagoreans. As Zhmud 2012, 431, points out, this testimony is not historically reliable. The same obviously holds true for the report of the author of *De placitis*, who claims that Pythagoras himself taught that ἡ μονάς was νοῦς (1.3.8 and 1.7.18; Diels 1879, 281–2 and 302).

<sup>413</sup> Cf. a similar train of thought in Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 3:22, where God says, “Behold, Adam was alone on the earth as I am alone in the heavens on high” (trans. M. Maher); see also Tg. Neof. Gen 3:22.

ὁμοίωσις θεῶ.<sup>414</sup> Philo “applied the relation of unicity that Plato draws between model and cosmos ... to the relation between God, the cosmos, and the first human being.”<sup>415</sup>

It is quite telling, however, that Philo never describes Adam as a monad. As Baer points out, while Adam’s oneness was “a state of original harmony in which the body was completely subservient to the sovereign mind” (see *Opif.* 136–139), in the case of Moses, the “twofold nature of soul and body was transformed into the unity of pure mind.”<sup>416</sup> Moses’ level of being is thus clearly superior to that of Adam.

The same probably holds true for everyone else. Samuel is said to be shaped (κεκόσμηται) “according to the one and the monad (κατὰ τὸ ἓν καὶ τὴν μονάδα)” (*Deus* 11), and even the angels are only like the monad (ἄγγελοι, ἀσώματοι ψυχαί ... μονάδι ὁμοιούμεναι) (*Spec.* 1.66).<sup>417</sup> But none of them is a monad himself—only Moses is. It is therefore possible to speak of different levels of oneness in Philo: God, who is above the monad; Moses, who became a monad; and angels and righteous men, who are like the monad.

Another author who deserves to be mentioned in this survey is Plutarch. In his *De E apud Delphos*, Plutarch maintains a view that is quite similar to that expressed by Philo in his *Leg.* 2.2 (cited above). According to Plutarch, true unity is one of the features that make divinity different from humanity. While every human being is subject to constant change (and therefore is not one, but many), God is both immutable and one.<sup>418</sup> That is why he is called Apollo, “the one who rejects multiplicity” (393c: ἀρνούμενος τὰ πολλά):<sup>419</sup>

Dead is the man of yesterday, for he is passed into the man of today; and the man of today is dying as he passes into the man of tomorrow. Nobody remains one person, nor is one person; but we become many persons (μένει δ’ οὐδεὶς οὐδ’ ἔστιν εἷς, ἀλλὰ γιγνόμεθα πολλοί) (392d; trans. F.C. Babbitt).

But He, being one (εἷς), has with only one “now” completely filled “forever.” Only what is after this pattern truly is (μόνον ἐστὶ τὸ κατὰ τοῦτ’ ὄντως ὄν), nor having been nor about to be, nor has it had a beginning nor is it destined to come to an end. Under these conditions, therefore, we ought, as we pay Him reverence, to greet Him and to address Him with the words, “Thou art (εἷς)”; or even, I vow, as did some of the men of old, “Thou art one (εἶ ἔν).” In fact the deity is not many (οὐ γὰρ πολλά τὰ θεῖόν ἐστιν), like each of us.... But being must have unity, even as unity must have being (ἓν εἶναι δεῖ τὸ ὄν, ὥσπερ ὄν τὸ ἓν) (393a–b; trans. F.C. Babbitt, altered).

Finally, we come to Clement of Alexandria. Clement agrees with Philo in placing God above monad; in *Paed.* 1.8.71, he quotes John 17:21–3, pointing out that “God is one, beyond the one, and

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<sup>414</sup> Runia 1986, 342.

<sup>415</sup> Runia 2001, 356.

<sup>416</sup> Baer 1970, 50.

<sup>417</sup> These references are from Völker 1952, 533.

<sup>418</sup> As John Whittaker points out, the same concept occurs in the Gospel of Truth: “It is within Unity (ἑνότητος) that each one will attain himself; within knowledge he will purify himself from multiplicity (οὐκ ἑνότητος) into Unity” (NHC I 25.10–15; trans. H.W. Attridge and G.W. MacRae). See Whittaker 1969a, 191.

<sup>419</sup> Plutarch understands the name Ἀπόλλων as privative ἀ + πολλά. This etymology is attested in various sources; see Whittaker 1969a, 187.

even above the monad (ἐν δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἐπέκεινα τοῦ ἐνὸς καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτὴν μονάδα).<sup>420</sup> As Salvatore R. C. Lilla points out, Clement identifies the monad with Christ. “This is the reason why Clement, when speaking about the perfection of man, uses such terms as μοναδικός or μονάς: since Christ, the Logos, is the μονάς, man must become μοναδικός as well in order to reach the ὁμοίωσις with God.”<sup>421</sup>

The main point of disagreement between Philo and Clement is that, while Philo thought that only Moses was able to become a monad, in Clement’s view it is something that in theory is within everyone’s powers. In *Strom.* 6.11.87, Clement speaks of “the progress of a righteous person that reaches completion in becoming a unity (εἰς μονάδα τελευτῶσα ἢ τοῦ δικαίου προκοπή).” There are several other passages that illustrate Clement’s use of the motif of the righteous becoming one; according to these passages, there seem to be three different aspects of achieving oneness. What is striking is that, in every instance, Clement emphasizes the role of the divine mediator, the Son.

First, in order to come into unity a person needs to imitate Christ by getting rid of his or her passions. In *Strom.* 4.23.151–152, Clement quotes a Pythagorean saying,<sup>422</sup> “it is also necessary that a human becomes one (ἕνα γενέσθαι καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον δεῖν),” noting that it is so, because the archpriest is one and God is one. A human can become one by means of ἀπάθεια: “when a human makes himself divine by getting rid of passions he immaculately becomes unitary (εἰς δὲ τὴν ἀπάθειαν θεούμενος ἄνθρωπος ἀχράντως μοναδικὸς γίνεται).”

Elsewhere (*Strom.* 3.10.69; cf. 3.13.93), Clement says that the one who has risen above anger (θυμός) and passion (ἐπιθυμία) “has become like the Saviour (κατὰ τὴν πρὸς τὸν σωτῆρα ἐξομοίωσιν) and has attained to a state of continence (ἐγκράτεια) no longer maintained with difficulty. He has united (ένώσας) knowledge, faith, and love. Thenceforth he is one (εἷς) in his judgment and truly spiritual” (trans. H. Chadwick). It is remarkable that, while Clement agrees with Plato in his understanding of human perfection as oneness, he sees the process of becoming one quite differently: τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν and τὸ θυμοειδὴς should be completely annihilated, not merely made subordinate to reason.<sup>423</sup>

Second, since the Son is a unity, it is through faith in him that a person can be united with him and become a unity. This issue is discussed in one of the most fascinating passages of Clement’s corpus, *Strom.* 4.25.156–157. In this passage, Clement speculates about the oneness of the Son. Christ is one in the sense that he is the unity of all his powers. It is in him that all the powers of the Spirit become one. In a similar vein, if a person believes in him, he or she becomes unitary, because faith transforms the believer into a unity with the Son. The unfaithful, on the other hand, are divided, because their disbelief separates them from the Son:

πᾶσαι δὲ αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ πνεύματος συλλήβδην μὲν ἓν τι πρᾶγμα γενόμεναι συντελοῦσιν εἰς τὸ αὐτό, τὸν υἱόν, ἀπαρέμφατος δὲ ἐστὶ τῆς περὶ ἐκάστης αὐτοῦ τῶν δυνάμεων ἐννοίας. καὶ δὴ οὐ γίνεται ἀτεχνῶς ἓν ὡς ἓν, οὐδὲ πολλὰ ὡς μέρη ὁ υἱός, ἀλλ’ ὡς πάντα ἓν. ἔνθεν καὶ πάντα· κύκλος γὰρ ὁ αὐτὸς πασῶν τῶν δυνάμεων εἰς ἓν εἰλουμένων καὶ ἐνουμένων ... διὸ δὴ καὶ τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν καὶ

<sup>420</sup> See also Lilla 1971, 216.

<sup>421</sup> Lilla 1971, 112; cf. Krämer 1964, 283.

<sup>422</sup> According to Whittaker 1978, 216–7, this saying is identical with the “vetus dictum” quoted by Ambrose in his *Ep. ex. coll.* 14 (63).60: “Assuesce unus esse.”

<sup>423</sup> See the discussion of Clement’s partition of the soul in chapter 10.

τὸ δι' αὐτοῦ πιστεῦσαι μοναδικόν ἐστι γενέσθαι, ἀπερισπάστως ἐνούμενον ἐν αὐτῷ, τὸ δὲ ἀπιστῆσαι διστάσαι ἐστὶ καὶ διαστῆναι καὶ μερισθῆναι.

Having become one deed, all the powers of the Spirit produce one Son, and it is not possible to limit him to the concept of any of his individual powers.<sup>424</sup> And the Son neither simply becomes one as one, nor many as parts, but he is one as all, and all comes from him. For he is the circle of all the powers being bound and united into one.... That is why to become unitary means to believe in him and by him and to become one in him without distraction. On the other hand, to disbelieve means to hesitate, to be separated and to be divided.

The Platonist background of *Strom.* 4.25.156 was recognized by a number of scholars.<sup>425</sup> By saying that the Son is one ὡς πάντα ἓν, i.e. in the same sense as all is one, Clement conceptualizes the Son in terms of the second hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*:

Furthermore, the one is all the parts of itself (καὶ μὴν τά γε πάντα μέρη τὰ αὐτοῦ τὸ ἓν ἐστι), and not any more or less than all.... So if all its parts are actually in a whole, and the one is both all the parts and the whole itself (ἐστὶ δὲ τά τε πάντα τὸ ἓν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ὅλον), and all the parts are contained by the whole, the one would be contained by the one; and thus the one itself would, then, be in itself (Plato, *Parm.* 145c; trans. M. L. Gill and P. Ryan).

By applying the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides* to the Son, Clement introduces the social dimension to his theology of oneness. The Son is “one as all” in the sense that he is the totality of all his powers. Through faith, every Christian can become a part of this totality.

That Clement thought of oneness not only as individual perfection, but also as *social* perfection, is evident from the third and final passage that I want to discuss, *Protr.* 9.88. In this passage, Christians, called “the worshippers of the good” (οἱ τὰγαθοῦ προσκυνηταί) and “the admirers of the good things” (οἱ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ζηλωταί), are exhorted to unite “into one love” after the manner of Christ, the divine monad. Moreover, it is under the guidance of this sole leader that they can become “the unity of many.”

Let us who are many (οἱ πολλοί) hasten to be gathered together into one love (εἰς μίαν ἀγάπην) according to the unity of the monadic being (κατὰ τὴν τῆς μοναδικῆς οὐσίας ἕνωσιν). Similarly, let us pursue unity (ἐνότης) by the practice of good works (ἀγαθοεργούμενοι), seeking the good monad (ἡ ἀγαθὴ μονάς). And the unity of many (ἡ ἐκ πολλῶν ἕνωσις), bringing a divine harmony out of polyphony and dispersion (ἐκ πολυφωνίας καὶ διασποράς), becomes one symphony (μία συμφωνία), following one leader and teacher (εἷς χορηγὸς καὶ διδάσκαλος), the Word, and never ceasing till it reaches the truth itself, with the cry, “Abba Father” (*Protr.* 9.88.2–3; trans. G. W. Butterworth, altered).

<sup>424</sup> As Colson 1921, 156–8, pointed out, ἀπαρέμφατος is a grammatical term that signifies the infinitive mood. Thus, Clement's point is that “the idea of the Son does not call up the thought of powers exhibited singly and one to the exclusion of another, but of powers blended into a single whole.”

<sup>425</sup> See, e.g., Whittaker 1969b, 99 and Lilla 1971, 205.

It is clear, therefore, that Clement's theology of oneness goes hand in hand with his Christology. First, to become one means to extirpate the two lower parts of the tripartite soil, just like the Son did. Second, it means to become one with the Son, who is "one as all." Finally, it means for the whole community to become a unity by being guided by one leader, the Son, and by imitating his oneness.

This survey shows that the notion of becoming one was quite popular among Platonists and Platonizing authors. It also shows that the notion had many versions and that each of the authors discussed above had his own views on certain aspects of becoming one. For instance, we learn that oneness can be achieved either in this life (Plato) or in the afterlife (Philip of Opus), or it cannot be achieved at all, since it is a divine attribute that has nothing to do with the human race (Plutarch). Moreover, according to Philo, there was only one person, Moses, capable of this transformation, while, according to Clement, every human individual can set himself or herself on the task of becoming one.

It is clear that the Thomasine concept of oneness, if compared with those of the other authors, reveals certain distinctive features as well: while Plato sees oneness as the harmonizing of the parts of the soul and Philip of Opus sees it as freedom from all perceptions, *Thomas* sees oneness as the elimination of binary oppositions. Yet I would say that all these authors share the same sentiment. It is against this background that the Thomasine sayings about becoming οὗα οὐωτ should be read. Even if the author(s) of these sayings knew the myth of Adam's original androgyny, Platonist philosophy was apparently far more appealing.

Comparing the sayings in question with the Platonist tradition enables me to make the following two observations that might be relevant for the interpretation of *Thomas*:

(1) First, it is noteworthy that *Thomas*, Plato, and Clement understand oneness as both individual and social perfection. As we have seen, in Plato's *Respublica*, a properly balanced city resembles a properly balanced soul. The city becomes a unity only after all its citizens are united. The same seems to hold true in the case of Clement's theology as well. Clement differs from Plato, however, in arguing that it is only through the agency of the divine mediator, the Son, that oneness can be achieved.

It is quite possible that *Thomas* also recognized both the personal and social aspects of oneness. Admittedly, when Jesus speaks of becoming one, he always addresses his disciples in the plural, and it is uncertain whether he speaks about the transformation of an individual or about the group as a whole. Yet, while the physiological details of saying 22:4–7 ("a hand instead of a hand," "a foot instead of a foot") make it unlikely that the author spoke about the transformation of a group, such a transformation might well have been in the mind of the author(s) of *Thomas* 4:2–3 (cited in section 7.1.2, above) and 23 (cited in section 7.2.2, below). It is noteworthy that, unlike sayings 22 and 106, which speak of becoming one from "the two," *Thomas* 4:2–3 speaks of becoming one from "many" (πολλοί / ραϑ). The saying resonates with the Platonic motto εἶς ἐκ πολλῶν both in its terminology and its content, which makes it quite likely that it refers not only to the individual oneness, but also to the unity of the group of individuals.

It is worth noting that the same motto, εἶς ἐκ πολλῶν, is applied to social transformation in a Valentinian theory reported by Clement in his *Exc.* 21–22 and 35–36.<sup>426</sup> As Einar Thomassen points

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<sup>426</sup> See Thomassen 2006, 377–83.

out, the theory provides “a mythological framework for baptismal initiation.”<sup>427</sup> According to this myth, the seed of Sophia consisted of two parts, the angels, or τὰ ἄρρενικά, and the Valentinians, or τὰ θηλυκά. When we are baptized, “we are raised up ‘equal to angels’ (Luke 20:36), and restored to unity<sup>428</sup> with the males, member for member (ἐγειρόμεθα οὖν ἡμεῖς, ἰσάγγελοι τοῖς ἄρρεσιν ἀποκατασταθέντες, τοῖς μέλεσι τὰ μέλη, εἰς ἑνωσιν)” (Exc. 22.3; trans. R. P. Casey).<sup>429</sup>

The unification with angels is a prerequisite of our return to the Pleroma. Because the angels came from a single source (ἀπὸ ἐνός), they were produced in unity (ἐν ἐνότῃ) and are one (εἷς) (Exc. 36.1). But, since we were divided (οἱ μεμερισμένοι), “Jesus was baptized that the undivided should be divided (τὸ ἀμέριστον μερισθῆναι) until he should unite (ἐνώσῃ) us with them in the Pleroma.” The ultimate goal is that we, who are many, become one (ἡμεῖς, οἱ πολλοί, ἐν γενόμενοι) and “might all be mingled in in the One which was divided for our sakes” (τῷ ἐνὶ τῷ δι’ ἡμᾶς μερισθέντι ἀνακραθῶμεν) (36.2; trans. R. P. Casey).<sup>430</sup>

Unlike us, the many, the angels are one; they, however, became many in order to enable us to become one. Thus, there are two stages in the process of unification. Only after an individual is united with his or her angel can he or she become one with the rest of the seed of Sophia and, ultimately, with the Pleroma. To be united with an angel is, therefore, necessary, but not enough. As Thomassen puts it, “the ritual unification with one’s angel here below may be thought of as a preliminary union, a prefiguration, or an image, of an eschatological union.”<sup>431</sup>

This Valentinian theory demonstrates that the notion of oneness as human perfection was highly valued among various early Christian groups. There is no need to assume that this common interest in oneness stems from the “Gnosticism” of *Thomas* and Valentinianism; rather, it is due to their shared indebtedness to Platonism.

There is, however, an important difference between the Thomasine notion of oneness and the one expounded in Clement’s *Excerpta ex Theodoto*. While *Thomas* attempts to supplement a myth about Adam with Platonist metaphysics or, perhaps, even to substitute the former with the latter, the Valentinian theory transforms said metaphysics into a myth about male angels and female humans. It is this latter phenomenon that lends some color of truth to Arthur Darby Nock’s witty notion of “Gnosticism” as “Platonism run wild.”<sup>432</sup>

(2) There is yet another corollary to my survey of Platonist ideas about oneness. The way Philo and Clement speak about becoming μονάς or μοναδικός might be relevant for the discussion of the

<sup>427</sup> Thomassen 2006, 377.

<sup>428</sup> Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.21.3 (= Epiphanius, *Pan.* 34.20.2). Clement uses the phrase εἰς ἑνωσιν in *Strom.* 7.3.14.1: “every man who is won over for holiness is enlightened into an indissoluble unity (ἐκ φωτιζομένου εἰς ἑνωσιν ἀδιάκριτον παντὸς τοῦ ἀναληφθέντος εἰς ἀγιωσύνην ἀνθρώπου)” (trans. F. J. A. Hort and J. B. Mayor). It is worth noting that Clement also seems to use the expression in a baptismal context, since, as Joseph B. Mayor pointed out, “The word φωτισμός was commonly used for baptism” (Hort and Mayor 1902, 220).

<sup>429</sup> I agree with Robert Pierce Casey that τοῖς ἄρρεσιν belongs to εἰς ἑνωσιν (*pace* Sagnard 1970, 101 and Thomassen 2006, 379). Cf. *Exc.* 21.3: “the females, becoming men, are united to the angels (ἐνοῦται τοῖς ἀγγέλοις) and pass into the Pleroma” (trans. R. P. Casey).

<sup>430</sup> Sagnard 1970, 138 and Thomassen 2006, 382 assume that τῷ ἐνὶ refers to Jesus. It is quite possible, however, that Casey’s translation is accurate and it is τὸ ἑν that is implied in the text; in this case “the One” designates the divine realm as a whole.

<sup>431</sup> Thomassen 2006, 396.

<sup>432</sup> Nock 1986, 2:949.

Thomasine sayings about becoming *μοναχός*. The question of the meaning of the word *μοναχός* in *Thomas* is not an easy one. However, as I will show in section 7.2, there are reasons to believe that the Thomasine word *μοναχός* has several meanings, including “he who is a unity.” In this case, Philo and Clement provide us with parallels that are similar to the Thomasine sayings not only in their content, but also in their wording.

## 7.2. Becoming *ΜΟΝΑΧΟС*

While there is no doubt that the motif of “becoming one” is present in sayings 4, 11, 22, 23, and 106, some scholars believe that it is also present in sayings 16, 49, and 75, the three of which all speak of being or becoming *ΜΟΝΑΧΟС*. Klijn is the first scholar to have made such a suggestion.

### 7.2.1. Aramaic Background?

According to Klijn, the three terms employed in the Coptic *Thomas*, *ογα*, *ογα ογωτ*, and *ΜΟΝΑΧΟС*, render the same word, “single one.” The fact that the Coptic text has three terms instead of one implies that the fourth-century translator did not realize that he was dealing with a technical term. Klijn argues that these three Coptic terms “go back” to either Greek *εἷς* or Syriac *ܐܝܢܐ*.<sup>433</sup> This hypothesis, despite its ingenuity, is impossible to accept. If we assume that *ογα*, *ογα ογωτ*, and *ΜΟΝΑΧΟС* render Greek *εἷς*, we would need to explain why the translator used *ΜΟΝΑΧΟС* in some cases, but not in the others. It is even less likely that these Coptic terms correspond to a single technical term of the hypothetical Syriac original, since, as Simon Gathercole has convincingly argued, the Syriac *Vorlage* of *Thomas* most probably never existed.<sup>434</sup>

A similar case (that there is no difference in the meaning of *ογα ογωτ* and *ΜΟΝΑΧΟС*) was recently argued in a series of articles by Dmitrij F. Bumazhnov. Bumazhnov believes that the concept of *μοναχός* in *Thomas* and the Dialogue of the Savior was influenced by the Aramaic term *ܐܝܢܐ* (or *ܝܚܝܕܝܐ*) “which means the religiously significant solitude” in the Targums.<sup>435</sup>

Bumazhnov takes as a point of departure the observations of Fritzleo Lentzen-Deis, who has pointed out that in the Targums “Der Titel ‘Einziger’ gehört in die Reihe der Prädikate für von Gott auserwählte Menschen und für das auserwählte Volk Israel.”<sup>436</sup> According to Bumazhnov, the fact that *Thomas* 49 calls *ܡܡܢܐܚܘܥ* “the elect”<sup>437</sup> indicates that there is a connection between the terms *ܐܝܢܐ* and *ΜΟΝΑΧΟС*. Since those who become *ογα ογωτ* are also considered the chosen ones (saying 23), the terms *ογα ογωτ* and *ΜΟΝΑΧΟС* are interchangeable: “Der gemeinsame Kontext der Erwählung mit dessen targumischem Hintergrund wäre als ein Argument dafür zu betrachten, daß *ܡܡܢܐܚܘܥ* und

<sup>433</sup> See Klijn 1962, 271–2. It worth noting that Klijn avoids the question of the original language of *Thomas*. Elsewhere (Klijn 1972), he argues that *Thomas* was written in a multilingual environment, where Syriac, Aramaic, and Greek coexisted.

<sup>434</sup> See Gathercole 2012, 19–125.

<sup>435</sup> Bumazhnov 2008, 263–264.

<sup>436</sup> Lentzen-Deis 1970, 240.

<sup>437</sup> Bumazhnov follows the suggestion of the Berliner Arbeitskreis that *ܐܘܐ* in the expression *ܡܡܢܐܚܘܥ ܐܘܐ ܡܬܥܘܬܝ* renders an epexegetical *καί*. See Bumazhnov 2007, 256. I do not find this suggestion appealing (see section 7.2.2, below).



ογα ογωτ durchaus verwandte Vorstellungen ausdrücken und möglicherweise beide auf das aramäische ܢܕܝܬ zurückgehen.”<sup>438</sup>

Setting aside the question of whether or not the word μοναχος in *Thomas* reveals any Targumic influence,<sup>439</sup> I find the idea that the Thomasine terms ογα ογωτ and μοναχος both stem from the same Aramaic word very unlikely. There is an obvious semantic difference between ογα ογωτ and μοναχος: while to be μοναχος at least sometimes means to be separated, to be ογα ογωτ always means to be united.<sup>440</sup>

Nevertheless, although I find the hypotheses that Klijn and Bumazhnov posit unconvincing, their initial insight might be correct. In the final part of this chapter, I will argue that all the sayings that mention those who are ογα, ογα ογωτ, or μοναχος refer to oneness as human perfection, which of course does not mean that all these terms go back to the same Syriac or Aramaic expression.

### 7.2.2. The Meaning of μοναχός in *Thomas*

The only copy of *Thomas* that contains sayings 16, 49, and 75 comes from a codex that was produced in Egypt in the fourth century. Since the first witness of the Greek noun μοναχός meaning “monk” comes either from 324,<sup>441</sup> or possibly even from 311/312,<sup>442</sup> it is possible that for the readers of the Nag Hammadi version of *Thomas*, and indeed maybe already for its Coptic translator,<sup>443</sup> the expression ܢܡܢܐܚܘܫ / ܡܢܐܚܘܫ in the text designated monks.<sup>444</sup>

As E. A. Judge puts it, “whatever the literary origin of the Coptic work, we must recognize the possibility that the Greek loan-word was adopted by the Coptic author ... because at the time he was writing he knew that μοναχός was the name of a recognized social type in Egypt.” If this is the case, then “the meaning of the word in the Gospel of Thomas could be that of ‘monk,’ provided that the dating of the Coptic composition fell later than the time at which that sense became current in Egypt.”<sup>445</sup>

Whereas the word μοναχος of the fourth-century Coptic *Thomas* could have been understood as “the name of a recognized social type,” the word μοναχός of the “original” Greek *Thomas*, as I

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<sup>438</sup> Bumazhnov 2007, 257.

<sup>439</sup> I return to this issue later in this chapter.

<sup>440</sup> Cf. Uro 1998a, 159.

<sup>441</sup> Judge 1977, 86. See also the table in Choat 2002, 9–10.

<sup>442</sup> Tetz 1990, 102; cf. Bumazhnov 2010, 24.

<sup>443</sup> Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to ascertain the date of the Coptic translation of any individual text from the Nag Hammadi codices. “The original translation from Greek into Coptic, in any given case, may date as far back as the second half of the third century, or it may have taken place during the years around 350, shortly before the production of the copy known to us. The Nag Hammadi collection of texts may well include any number of specimens located somewhere between these extremes, but there is no way of identifying them” (Funk 1995, 143). It is tempting to suggest a third-century date for the Coptic translation of *Thomas*, since the Nag Hammadi version of this text seems to presuppose a complex history of dialectal editing. According to Funk 1993, 170–1, it is likely that the original Coptic *Thomas* was written in a southern dialect, but at some point in its transmission was more or less successfully “Sahidicized.” Moreover, the person who edited the Coptic text of *Thomas* cannot be identified with the scribe of NHC II, since the latter was quite reluctant “to impose his own standards of spelling on his work” (Funk 1995, 133). Yet we must keep in mind that, as Funk 1995, 144, notes, “The most extensive dialectal rewriting and editing, even if it involved several stages and a number of different persons in different places, may have been implemented, theoretically, only a few weeks before the production of our codices.”

<sup>444</sup> Cf. Lundhaug and Jenott 2015, 261.

<sup>445</sup> Judge 1977, 87.

defined it in chapter 1, must have a different meaning. A sceptic could perhaps raise an objection and suggest that sayings 16, 49, and 75 were never part of the “original” *Thomas*, but were added to the collection at the Coptic stage of its textual transmission.<sup>446</sup> In what follows, I will argue that this is not the case.

The last verse of saying 16 reads, ἀγὼ σενᾶωρε ἐρατοῦ ἐγὼ ἡμοναχος, “And they will stand as solitary ones” (*Thomas* 16:4). One could suggest that this verse, if not the whole saying, was added to *Thomas* to appeal to its alleged monastic audience.<sup>447</sup> It is worth noting, however, that *Thomas* 16:4 is strikingly similar to *Thomas* 23:2, ἀγὼ σενᾶωρε ἐρατοῦ ἐγὼ οὐα οὐωτ, “And they will stand as a single one.” Since doublets and repetitive formulas are important Thomasine rhetorical devices, it is likely that both these verses were part of the “original” *Thomas*. The content of these two verses also indicates that they were part of the “original” text. As I have already noted in section 7.1, *Thomas* 23:2 is part of a group of sayings that understands human perfection as being/becoming one. That these sayings were part of the “original” *Thomas*, as I defined it in chapter 1, is clear from the fact that one of them, *Thomas* 4, is attested not only by NHC II, but also by P.Oxy. 654.

It is also likely that saying 75 was part of the “original” *Thomas*. While it is doubtful that there is an organizing principle that would explain the structure of the sayings collection as a whole, it is clear that certain groups of sayings constitute thematic units. For instance, sayings 63, 64, and 65 are a triad of parables in each of which “figures who seek or possess wealth or who strive for status-recognition among their peers are criticized and their pursuits lampooned.”<sup>448</sup> Similarly, sayings 73, 74, and 75 are a triad of antithetic aphorisms offering “three variants of the theme of the fewness of the elect.”<sup>449</sup> There seems to be no reason to doubt that the “original” *Thomas* employed thematic grouping as an organizing principle. It seems clear, in fact, that sayings 73, 74, and 75 comprised one of those “original” thematic groups, since, as Howard M. Jackson has shown, saying 74 is alluded to in the “Celestial Dialogue” quoted by Celsus (see Origen, *Cels.* 8.15), this allusion being “the earliest attestation to the *Gospel of Thomas* yet known.”<sup>450</sup>

Finally, it does not seem reasonable to assume that saying 49 is a later addition to the “original” text of *Thomas*. The peculiar expression that we find in this saying, ἡμοναχος ἀγὼ ἐτσοττι, also occurs in the Dialogue of the Savior (NHC III 120.26: ἡσῶττι ἡῆῆμονοχος; cf. NHC III 121.18–20). As Risto Uro points out, even though the Dialogue of the Savior might not be directly dependent on *Thomas*, “the great number of parallels and affinities” between the two texts indicates that they share a “symbolic universe.”<sup>451</sup> There seems to be no reason to doubt that the affinities between the

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<sup>446</sup> Another alternative is to suppose that sayings 16, 49, and 75 were part of the “original” text, but that these sayings did not contain the word *μοναχός*. Klijn (see section 7.1.1, above) seems to entertain this possibility and think that the Coptic translator might have used the word *μοναχος* to render Greek *εἷς*. According to Klijn 1962, 272, by doing so the translator “obviously tries to render a term unknown to him with the help of a word familiar to his readers.” As I have already pointed out, this hypothesis seems to be very unlikely, since it leaves unclear why the translator was inconsistent, i.e. why he did not always render *εἷς* with *μοναχος*, but occasionally used *οὐα* and *οὐα οὐωτ*. It is also worth noting that, as I have pointed out in chapter 5, the Coptic translator seems to have tried to be careful with terminology of *Thomas* and not to render a Greek word with a different Greek word.

<sup>447</sup> It is worth noting that some scholars hypothesize about the monastic setting of the Nag Hammadi codices. For a discussion of this hypothesis see, e.g., Khosrojev 1995; Jenott and Pagels 2010; Lewis and Blount 2014; Lundhaug and Jenott 2015.

<sup>448</sup> Kloppenborg 2006, 43.

<sup>449</sup> Montefiore and Turner 1962, 80. See also the discussion of saying 75 below.

<sup>450</sup> Jackson 1992, 305

<sup>451</sup> See Uro 2003, 46–51.

Dialogue of the Savior and *Thomas* were present already in the Greek versions of these two texts and that the expression  $\mu\omicron\mu\omicron\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$   $\alpha\gamma\omega$   $\epsilon\tau\varsigma\omicron\tau\tau\iota$  was one of these affinities.

Thus, the original meaning of the word  $\mu\omicron\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$  in *Thomas* was different from the one it might have had in the fourth century. What, then, did this word mean? The most widespread view on the meaning of  $\mu\omicron\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$  in *Thomas* is expressed by April D. DeConick: “ $\mu\omicron\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$  in *Thomas* is the Greek translation ( $\mu\omicron\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$ ) of the Syriac word  $\text{ܡܡܚܕܐ}$ ,”<sup>452</sup> which is a technical term for “a person who lives singly,” “a celibate.”<sup>453</sup>

As Dmitrij F. Bumazhnov points out, the problem with this hypothesis is that the word  $\text{ܡܡܚܕܐ}$  received this technical meaning in the first half of the fourth century: “Diese späte Bezeugung muß bei der Erwägung der eventuellen Beeinflussungsmöglichkeiten berücksichtigt werden.”<sup>454</sup> Risto Uro has also put the hypothesis into question: “it does not seem methodologically sound to read all the later technical meanings of  $\text{ܡܡܚܕܐ}$  into the  $\mu\omicron\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$  of the *Gospel of Thomas*, which by any dating is much earlier than the Syriac texts which use this word.”<sup>455</sup>

Perhaps the most important source that sheds light on the Thomasine use of the term  $\mu\omicron\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$  is the corpus of Aquila’s, Symmachus’ and Theodotion’s Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible. The word appears in these texts seven times (Gen 2:18  $\alpha\iota$   $\lambda'$ ; 22:2  $\alpha'$ ; Ps 21/22:21  $\alpha'$ ; 24/25:16  $\alpha'$ ; 34/35:17  $\alpha'$ ; 67/68:7  $\sigma'$  and  $\theta'$ ; Pr 4:3  $\alpha'$ ).<sup>456</sup> In six out of the seven cases, it renders Hebrew  $\text{יחיד}$ , “only one,” “isolated one.”

As Klijn points out, “in circles where these translations originated the word was not considered a technical term” and did not have a fixed meaning.<sup>457</sup> While in Gen 2:18 and Ps 67/68:7,  $\mu\omicron\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$  can be translated as “bachelor,” in other instances it probably has other meanings. For instance, in Gen 22:2, the word is applied to Isaac, the *only* son of Abraham, while, in Ps 24/25:16, it means that David is *lonely*.

What is more, in his translation of Ps 85/86:11, Aquila renders the Hebrew verb  $\text{יחד}$  (“unite,”  $\text{PI'EL}$  of  $\text{יחד}$ , “be united”) with the Greek verb  $\mu\omicron\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\omega$ , “make one,” which is unattested elsewhere.<sup>458</sup>

$\text{יחד לבבי ליראה שמך}$

$\text{Μονάχωσον τὴν καρδίαν μου τοῦ φοβεῖσθαι τὸ ὄνομά σου.}$

Make my heart one so that I fear your name.

We encounter a similar translation of this sentence in Symmachus’ version, even though he did not use any words cognate to  $\mu\omicron\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$ :

<sup>452</sup> DeConick 1996, 4.

<sup>453</sup> See Vööbus 1958–1988, 108.

<sup>454</sup> Bumazhnov 2007, 259.

<sup>455</sup> Uro 1998a, 158; cf. Uro 1997, 225.

<sup>456</sup> See Hatch et al. 1998, 932; Reider and Turner 1966, 160; see also the table in Morard 1973, 348.

<sup>457</sup> Klijn 1962, 272.

<sup>458</sup> See Reider 1916, 109.

“Ἐνωσον τὴν καρδίαν μου εἰς φόβον τοῦ ὀνόματός σου.”<sup>459</sup>

Unite my heart to make me fear your name.

In what follows, I will argue that all the three aspects of the meaning of *μοναχός* in these translations—uniqueness, loneliness, unity—are present in *Thomas* as well. While the solitude of the Thomasine *μοναχοί* has been scrutinized in a large number of publications, the two other aspects have never been properly discussed in the scholarly literature.

(1) *Μοναχός* = “lonely,” “solitary.” As I have noted in chapter 5, *Thomas* 30:1–2 praises solitude and condemns communal living. There is no doubt that a similar ideal of becoming solitary underlies the Thomasine term *μοναχός*. Saying 16 is the most revealing source for the understanding of this aspect of the meaning of the word. Here, Jesus encourages his followers to leave their families behind and be alone.

16:1 πεχε ιϥ ξε ταχα εγνεεγε ν̄βι ρρωμε ξε ν̄ταειει ανουχε νογειρηνι εκ̄ν πκοσμος 16:2 αγω σεσοογνι αν ξε ν̄ταειει ανουχε ν̄ρ̄ν̄πωρ̄χ εκ̄ν πκαρ ογκωρ̄τ ογχιγε ογπολεμος 16:3 ογ̄ν̄ τ̄ογ γαρ ναωφ̄βε ρ̄ν̄ ογ̄νει ογ̄ν̄ ωροντ ναωωπε εκ̄ν σναγ αγω σναγ εκ̄ν ωροντ πειωτ εκ̄ν̄ πωρηε αγω πωρηε εκ̄ν̄ πειωτ 16:4 αγω σεναωρε ερατογ̄ εγ̄ο̄ ν̄μοναχος

16:1 Jesus says: “Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the earth. 16:2 But they do not know that I have come to cast dissension upon the earth: fire, sword, (and) war. 16:3 For there will be five in one house: there will be three against two and two against three, the father against the son, and the son against the father. 16:4 And they will stand as solitary ones.”<sup>460</sup>

According to Uro, the word *μοναχός* here refers to those “who have been compelled to break away from family,” but does not necessarily mean “a celibate.”<sup>461</sup> It is not clear whether the dissolution of family ties had to be done once and for all or whether certain sexual activity was after all acceptable.

In spite of the clear ascetic inclination, one can recognize a certain ambiguity in *Thomas*’ relation to the issue of marriage versus celibacy. *Thomas* praises those who have broken with their families and have become “solitary,” but never directly rejects marriage and sexual intercourse.<sup>462</sup>

Even though Uro appears at first glance to make a solid point, there is at least one argument that can be made against his understanding of Thomasine take on celibacy. Unlike saying 16, saying 75 is built on sexual imagery:

<sup>459</sup> Both Greek texts are cited in Eusebius’ *Commentaria in Psalmos*, ad loc. See Field 1875, 2:237.

<sup>460</sup> For the sake of the reader’s convenience, I leave the translation unaltered, even though a more justified approach would be to leave the word *μοναχός* without any translation, since the point of the present chapter is that the word *μοναχός* has several different meanings.

<sup>461</sup> Uro 1998a, 159.

<sup>462</sup> Uro 1998a, 161.

75 πεδε ιϥ οϥν ραρ αρερατοϥ ριρῃ προ αλλα ἡμοναχοϥ νετναβωκ εϥοϥν επνα ἡωελεετ

75 Jesus said, “Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber” (trans. T. O. Lambdin).

A comment on the translation of this saying is in order. I agree with Thomas O. Lambdin who renders πμα ἡωελεετ as “the bridal chamber.” The Berliner Arbeitskreis renders it as “the wedding hall.” The latter translation is justified, if we presuppose that πμα ἡωελεετ renders οἱ γάμοι of the Greek *Vorlage*, as it does, e.g., in the Sahidic translation of Mt 25:10. It should be noted, however, that wedding imagery is also present in *Thomas* 104:3, where the Coptic text employs two Greek loan words, νυμφιος, “bridegroom,” and νυμφων. As Plisch has pointed out, it seems that the Thomasine terms νυμφων and μα ἡωελεετ have the same meaning and both derive from νυμφών.<sup>463</sup> In turn, the primary meaning of the word νυμφών is “bridal chamber.”<sup>464</sup>

I agree with Uro that the saying does not refer to any ritual “through which celibate persons only could enter the community.”<sup>465</sup> I find it difficult, however, to believe that the words ἡμοναχοϥ and πμα ἡωελεετ are combined in the saying unintentionally. It seems that the word μοναχός is employed here precisely because, in a marital context, μοναχός means “single” (cf. Aquila’s, Symmachus’ and Theodotion’s translations of Gen 2:18 and Ps 67/68:7).

This being the case, why would these celibate μοναχοί enter the bridal chamber? As Antti Marjanen has suggested, the bridal chamber and the bridegroom in *Thomas* 104:3 are metaphors for salvation and the person that attained salvation respectively.<sup>466</sup> Since *Thomas* 75 and *Thomas* 104:3 share their imagery and terminology, there can be little doubt that the former should be interpreted with due regard to the latter. It thus follows that both sayings portray salvation as the bridal chamber and that the same perfected individual is called μοναχοϥ in *Thomas* 75 and νυμφιος in *Thomas* 104:3. It makes sense, therefore, to suggest that the same metaphor of the bridegroom(s) entering/leaving the bridal chamber is present both in *Thomas* 75 and *Thomas* 104:3.

Thus, I propose that in *Thomas* 75 a μοναχός is likened to the bridegroom who is allowed in the bridal chamber, while the rest stand outside.<sup>467</sup> The saying describes a paradox: while the earthly bridal chambers are for those who desire to procreate, the heavenly ones are for those who abstain from sex. Hence, I am inclined to think that to become a μοναχός does in fact mean to live a sexually abstinent life.

(2) Μοναχός = “unique,” “one of a kind.” Unlike saying 16, saying 49 does not emphasize the social isolation of the μοναχοί, but rather their exceptional status:

<sup>463</sup> See Plisch 2008, 179 and 227. That the same Greek word is sometimes translated and sometimes retained should come as no surprise: cf., e.g., επιπορος in *Thomas* 64:3 and εϥωϣτ in *Thomas* 64:12 and 76:1–2.

<sup>464</sup> See BDAG, s.v. νυμφών.

<sup>465</sup> Uro 1998a, 158–9; cf. Plisch 2008, 179.

<sup>466</sup> See Marjanen 1998b, 171–2.

<sup>467</sup> Valentinians adhered to a somewhat similar view. According to Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.7.1 (= Epiphanius, *Pan.* 31.21.12), οἱ πνευματικοί “will be given as brides (νύμφαι) to the angels who surround Savior” (trans. D. J. Unger and J. J. Dillon); cf. *Exc.* 64. See also Thomassen 2006, 405.

49:1 πεχε ιϛ ξε ρενημακαριος νε νμοναχος αγω ετσοτιι ξε τετναρε ατηνητερο 49:2 ξε  
 ητωτη ηνεβολ ηρητϛ παλιν ετετναβωκ εμαγ

49:1 Jesus said, “Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the kingdom. 49:2 For you are from it, and to it you will return” (transl. T. O. Lambdin).<sup>468</sup>

Here, the term μοναχος is paired with the term σοτιι, “chosen,” and it seems that the two words are used as at least partial synonyms. As I have already noted, the term μοναχος in Aquila’s translation occasionally means “the only one.” It is worth noting that Aquila’s use of the term is just as that of classical Greek authors. Already in Aristotle, the word μοναχος means “unique”.<sup>469</sup>

ὥσπερ οὖν εἴρηται, λανθάνει ὅτι ἀδύνατον ὀρίσασθαι ἐν τοῖς αἰδίοις, μάλιστα δὲ ὅσα μοναχά, οἷον ἥλιος ἢ σελήνη.

As has been said, then, people do not realize that it is impossible to define in the case of eternal things, especially those which are unique, like the sun or the moon (*Metaph.* 1040a27–29; trans. W. D. Ross).

As Alfred Adam points out, the word μοναχος was used to designate unique objects up until the period of Late Antiquity and often functioned as a technical term in the papyri.<sup>470</sup> According to Friedrich Preisigke, in documentary texts, μοναχος designates “eine Urkunde, die nur in einer einzigen Ausfertigung vorliegt (ohne Nebenausfertigung oder Doppel).”<sup>471</sup> Hence, we read about, e.g., τὸ [χι]ρόγραφον (i.e. χειρόγραφον) μοναχόν (BGU 637.9–10 [212 CE]) or ἡ ὁμολογία μοναχή (BGU 13.16 [289 CE]). Sometimes, we encounter the substantivized expression τὸ μοναχόν, “document written in a single copy” (e.g., P.Oxy. 1473.37 [201 CE]).<sup>472</sup>

It seems that the same idea of singleness is implied in *Thomas* 49. I would therefore understand νμοναχος αγω ετσοτιι as “the unique and elect” (the Greek *Vorlage* of this saying probably read οἱ μοναχοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοί). The proposed translation makes the Berliner Arbeitskreis’ suggestion that αγω in this phrase renders an exegetical καὶ unnecessary. It is much more natural to consider the phrase a hendiadys, where two similar expressions are linked by a conjunction in order to increase the rhetorical effect of the entire phrase. Moreover, my proposal calls into question Bumazhnov’s theory of Aramaic influence on *Thomas*. The meaning of the word μοναχος itself explains why it was combined with the idea of being chosen. There is no need to speculate about the Jewish background of the concept.

The idea of the uniqueness and rareness of the μοναχοί is also present in *Thomas* 75 (cited above). As Jackson has pointed out, sayings 73, 74, and 75 form a thematic unit. Each of the three

<sup>468</sup> In this instance, I also prefer Lambdin’s translation to that of the Berliner Arbeitskreis. As I argue below, there is no reason to think that αγω in this saying renders an exegetical καὶ.

<sup>469</sup> See LSJ, s.v. μοναχος.

<sup>470</sup> Adam 1953–1954, 213–4.

<sup>471</sup> Preisigke 1915, 127, cf. Preisigke 1910, 205, Preisigke 1912–1920, 1:109, Preisigke and Kießling 1925–1931, 2:114–5.

<sup>472</sup> Preisigke and Kießling 1925–1931, 2:114.

sayings is phrased as an antithetic parallel construction and is intended to reveal “a contrast between the many and the few, the spiritually indecisive rabble and the committed elect.”<sup>473</sup> Saying 73 opposes the harvest that is great to the laborers that are few in number. Saying 74 states that there is a multitude standing around the well, but no one is brave enough to dive into the well.<sup>474</sup> It seems natural to read *Thomas* 75 along these lines and to conclude that ἡμοναχοι are contrasted with “many,” because the Thomasine μοναχοί are unique and exceptionally rare.

(3) Μοναχός = “unitary.” The suggestion that the term μοναχός in *Thomas* means “he who is one,” “he who is a unity” has been made by Dmitrij F. Bumazhnov, who discussed “die mögliche Konnotation der inneren Einheitlichkeit” of the Thomasine term μοναχοι.<sup>475</sup> Unfortunately, the arguments Bumazhnov offers are hardly convincing, since the parallel sources he cites (Philoxenus and Pseudo-Macarius) come from a much later historical period and hence are irrelevant to the discussion. Nevertheless, the hypothesis itself appears to be correct and, as I will try to demonstrate, can be substantiated by the text of *Thomas* itself.

My conjecture is that the person(s) responsible for the shape and arrangement of Thomasine sayings intended to hint at the oneness of μοναχοί by making the terms ογα ογωτ and μοναχοι resonate with each other. First of all, even though there is no reason to hypothesize about a single expression underlying both terms, it is still remarkable that not only the μοναχοί are called chosen (saying 49, cited above), but also those who become ογα ογωτ (saying 23):

23:1 πεχε ιϥ ξε ιηαϥετι τηνε ογα εβολ ρη̅ ωο αγω ϥναγ εβολ ρη̅ τβα<sup>476</sup> 23:2 αγω ϥεναωρε ερατογ εγο ογα ογωτ

23:1 Jesus says: “I will choose you, one from a thousand and two from ten thousand.”<sup>477</sup> 23:2 And they will stand as a single one.”

Second, it is remarkable that sayings 16:4 and 23:2 are quite similar in their wording:<sup>478</sup>

<i>Thomas</i> 16:4	<i>Thomas</i> 23:2
αγω ϥεναωρε ερατογ εγο ἡμοναχοι	αγω ϥεναωρε ερατογ εγο ογα ογωτ
And they will stand as solitary ones.	And they will stand as a single one.

<sup>473</sup> Jackson 1992, 304.

<sup>474</sup> For an interpretation of *Thomas* 74, see Jackson 1992, 300–5.

<sup>475</sup> Bumazhnov 2006, 295.

<sup>476</sup> According to Funk 2002, 86, the anarthrous form τβα is problematic. It is possible that the original Coptic texts read ρη̅ ρη̅τβα (a literal rendering of ἐκ μυρίων) and that later the plural definite article ρη̅ has dropped out through haplography.

<sup>477</sup> *Thomas* 23:1 has multiple parallels in early Christian literature. See Irenaeus’ report on Basilides (*Haer.* 1.24.6; cf. Epiphanius, *Pan.* 24.5.4); Pistis Sophia (134 = 350.11–2 Schmidt). According to Carlson 2014, 146–8, *Thomas* 23:1 is the source of a quotation in Origen’s *Pasch.* 1.101 = 126.11–2 Witte: εἰς πού [ἐκ] χιλίων καὶ δύο ἐκ μυρίων, “perhaps one [from] a thousand, and two from ten thousand.” For the quotations of *Thomas* 23:1 in Manichaean literature, see Funk 2002, 85–92.

<sup>478</sup> The Thomasine motif of “standing” reflected in these sayings will be discussed in chapter 8.

As I have said earlier, the use of repetitive formulae is one of the main rhetorical devices in *Thomas*. However, unlike sayings 8, 21, 24, 63, 65, and 96 with their unified formula (“whoever has ears should hear!”), these two sayings are terminologically different. Unlike the expression οὐα οὐωτ, the word μοναχoc has something to do with uniqueness and loneliness. Yet the two words are inserted in the same formula in order to echo or mirror each other, which makes it plausible that, among other things, the term μοναχός in *Thomas* is supposed to mean “he who is one.” That the word could have had such a meaning is confirmed by the fact that the verb μοναχόω meant “to make one” in Aquila’s translation of Ps 85/86:11.<sup>479</sup>

### 7.3. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have dealt with two important Thomasine expressions, οὐα οὐωτ (sayings 4, 11, 22, 23, and 106), and μοναχoc (sayings 16, 49, and 75). My conviction is that both terms express the Platonist idea of oneness as perfection.

In section 7.1, I discussed the background of the expression οὐα οὐωτ. My first objective (section 7.1.1) was to revisit the widespread interpretation of the sayings about becoming οὐα οὐωτ that was once proposed by Klijn. According to Klijn, the theology of *Thomas* presupposes a Jewish myth about Adam, who was originally an androgyne but was later divided into two parts. The fundamental feature of the myth *Thomas* knew of was the idea of Adam’s initial oneness. According to Klijn, the only Jewish author that shares this tradition with *Thomas* is Philo. As I tried to point out, Klijn’s hypothesis is hardly compelling, since Philo does not seem to adhere to said myth. As for *Thomas*, a few Thomasine sayings might allude to this myth, but the Thomasine motif of becoming one can hardly be explained away by it.

My second objective (section 7.1.2) was to demonstrate that becoming οὐα οὐωτ in *Thomas* should not be identified with becoming asexual. The most important saying in this regard is *Thomas* 22. As scholars of *Thomas* have recently realized, the Coptic of the saying is quite difficult. I find the understanding of the text of the saying I have proposed in this chapter the most economical one. According to my interpretation, to become neither male nor female is one of many transformations required for becoming one.

My third objective (section 7.1.3) was to show that the sayings about becoming οὐα οὐωτ should be studied against the background of Platonist metaphysics. Various Platonist authors, including Philo and Clement, understood human perfection as oneness. Although the texts disagree in details, and *Thomas* is no exception, the fundamental sentiment underlying these speculations is the same.

In section 7.2, I discussed the meaning of the Thomasine term μοναχoc. I started with calling into question the hypothesis of the same Syriac or Aramaic expression underlying οὐα οὐωτ and μοναχoc. Indeed, it is quite clear that the concepts οὐα οὐωτ and μοναχoc are not entirely identical.

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<sup>479</sup> Having established that the Thomasine term μοναχός presupposes the notion of oneness as perfection, we may take a closer look at *Thomas* 16:2, where Jesus says that he brought “divisions,” εἰρηπῶρα, into this world. Going through these “divisions” is a prerequisite of becoming a μοναχός. Thus, just like saying 75, saying 16 presents the reader with a paradox: according to saying 75, the bridal chamber is for the celibates; according to saying 16, division brings unity.



Since there are reasons to believe that the sayings about the *μοναχοί* were present in the “original” *Thomas*, the original meaning of the word *μοναχός* cannot be “monk.” I believe that the word is used in *Thomas* as a technical term and has three different aspects of meaning.

That the word *μοναχός* has these three aspects is evident from the way it is used in the translations of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. First, it means “the one who is lonely.” This aspect of the term *μοναχός* is evident from its use in saying 16, where it designates the individuals who acquired aloneness through the dissolution of family ties. Moreover, I believe that the context in which the word is used in *Thomas* 75 reveals that it means “the one who is sexually abstinent.” Second, it means “the one who is unique,” “one of a kind,” which is quite in accord with the way the word is used by classical authors and in papyri. The fact that the word has this aspect of meaning explains why *Thomas* associates being a *μοναχός* with being chosen. Third, it means “the one who is a unity.” That the word is supposed to have such a meaning may be inferred from the fact that in sayings 16:4 and 23:2 the words *ογα ογωτ* and *μοναχοc* are used as if they were synonyms. Another argument in favor of this hypothesis is that those who are *ογα ογωτ* and *μοναχοc* are both called “chosen.” It is, therefore, tempting to understand the Thomasine term *μοναχός* as an equivalent to Philo’s *μονάς* and Clement’s *μοναδικός*.

## 8. *Thomas* and the Platonists on Stability

In the previous chapter, I argued that the Thomasine expressions *οὐα οὐωτ* and *μοναχοc* express the Platonist idea of oneness as perfection. An important detail, however, was left unexplained, though it certainly deserves to be discussed in detail. Two of the sayings that deal with oneness as perfection, *Thomas* 16:4 and 23:2, associate oneness with “standing”:

*Thomas* 16:4

αὐτὼ cεναωδε εἰατοὺ εἶο ἡμοναχοc

And they will stand as solitary ones.

*Thomas* 23:2

αὐτὼ cεναωδε εἰατοὺ εἶο οὐα οὐωτ

And they will stand as a single one.

In what follows, I argue that “standing” in these, as well as in a few other Thomasine sayings, denotes the Platonist idea of divine stability; it is, therefore, no coincidence that these two metaphysical concepts, stability and oneness, are brought together. I first discuss interpretations of Thomasine “standing” by April D. DeConick, Michael Allen Williams, and Robert Murray, and argue that the context of the Thomasine sayings that deal with “standing” does not support the proposals of these scholars. I then discuss the multifold meanings of the expression *ωδε εἰατ* in these sayings as well as in their Greek *Vorlagen*. Finally, I discuss the Platonist parallels to the sayings that seem to refer to “transcendental ‘standing.’”<sup>480</sup>

### 8.1. DeConick, Williams, and Murray on “Standing” in *Thomas*

Before I discuss different contexts in which the expression *ωδε εἰατ* is used in *Thomas*, I would like to offer a brief survey of scholarly opinions regarding Thomasine “standing.” First, according to DeConick, “standing” in sayings 16, 18, and 23 refers to the attainment of angelic status and participation in “the cultic service before God’s throne.”<sup>481</sup> The angels are “described as those who ‘stand’ before God” in a number Jewish apocalyptic texts (1 En. 39:12–13; 47:3; 68:4;<sup>482</sup> 2 En. 21:1; T. Ab. [recension A] 7:11; 8:1). The expression can also be applied to the righteous ones, who thus assimilate to the condition of angels (Ascen. Isa. 9:9; 2 En. 21:3; 22:6–10).

Second, Williams has suggested that there was a connection between the practice of “standing in one place, absorbed in prayer and contemplation”<sup>483</sup> attested among Christian monks (see, e.g., Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 43.2) and the “standing” in *Thomas*. Since the Syrian monks, according to Theodoret of Cyrrhus (*Hist. rel.* 27.1), also practiced continual standing, it is possible that the designation *ܥܕ ܡܨܚܝܬܐ*, “covenanters,” could also mean “those who are characterized by the upright

<sup>480</sup> I borrow this expression from Williams 1985, 74.

<sup>481</sup> See DeConick 1996, 90; cf. Robbins 2013, 128–9.

<sup>482</sup> DeConick and Robbins refer to 1 En. 68:2, which is clearly due to a misprint.

<sup>483</sup> Williams 1985, 87.

stance”;<sup>484</sup> this Syriac term, in turn, “could very well illuminate” the language of standing in sayings 16, 18, and 23 of *Thomas*, “which seems to have a Syrian ancestry.”<sup>485</sup>

Third, Murray also tried to connect Thomasine “standing” with the traditions of Syriac Christianity.<sup>486</sup> In the Syriac-speaking area, the word ܡܨܚܐ designated ascetics that “formed a kind of ‘church within the Church’ called the ܡܨܚܐ.”<sup>487</sup> When the aspirants were baptized, they swore to celibacy and joined this “covenant.”<sup>488</sup> The very semantics of the term ܡܨܚܐ hints at the baptismal context: in the act of baptism, “a new member ‘took his stand’ for Christ and in the name of Christ.”<sup>489</sup> Since the Syriac *Vorlage* of *Thomas* spoke of “standing” as a single one, ܡܨܚܐ,<sup>490</sup> Thomasine sayings 16, 23, 49, and 75 bear evidence of “an early Judaeo-Christian baptismal exhortation.”<sup>491</sup>

Although all these interpretations are quite insightful, none of them is supported by the text of *Thomas*. First, sayings 16, 18, and 23 neither mention nor even allude to the notion of angels and their heavenly liturgy. Angels are mentioned in *Thomas* twice, in sayings 13:2 and 88:1,<sup>492</sup> and both times in a context that can be hardly interpreted as sympathetic. In *Thomas* 13:2, Simon Peter says that Jesus is “like a righteous angel,” but his view is inferior to the one of Thomas (*Thomas* 13:4).<sup>493</sup> Jesus is clearly much more than an angel, and, since, according to saying 108, our ultimate goal is to become like Jesus, it is very unlikely that assimilation to the angels is to be seen as a worthwhile enterprise.

Moreover, it is unlikely that we can learn anything useful from the angels. The meaning of *Thomas* 88:1, “the angels and the prophets will come to you and give to you those things you (already) have” (trans. T. O. Lambdin), is uncertain, but since many believed that the law of Moses was given through angels (Jub. 1:27; 2:1; Gal 3:19), it is probable that Jesus in saying 88 denies the authority of “the law and the prophets,” i.e. of the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>494</sup>

Second, it is unlikely that Thomasine sayings ever refer to the practice of standing. While there are two sayings that clearly mention literal standing, sayings 75 and 99 (see section 8.2.1, below), neither of them allude to any such practice. Moreover, it is doubtful that literal standing is implied in sayings 16, 18, and 23. It is much more likely that these sayings describe not the means of spiritual

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<sup>484</sup> Williams follows the suggestion made by Adam 1953–1954, 224–8. It is worth noting that, although Vööbus 1958–1988, 1:98–9, criticized this suggestion, it may be accurate. The Syriac noun ܡܨܚܐ, “covenant,” comes from the verbal root ܡܨܚ, “rise up,” “stand.” As Griffith 1998, 232, points out, “It is the nature of Semitic languages and their semantics to employ polyvalent terms. Given the presumption that all forms derive from a particular set of root consonants, they carry a reference to all the other lexical possibilities implicit in their shared roots.”

<sup>485</sup> See Williams 1985, 89–90.

<sup>486</sup> A similar attempt has recently been made by Dmitrij F. Bumazhnov, who also relates sayings 16, 23, and 75 to ܡܨܚܐ, but does not offer any interpretation of Thomasine “standing.” See Bumazhnov 2011.

<sup>487</sup> Murray 2004, 14.

<sup>488</sup> See Murray 2004, 15.

<sup>489</sup> Murray 1974, 78.

<sup>490</sup> Murray 1974, 70, assumes that both μοναχος and ογα ογωτ render ܡܨܚܐ. See the previous chapter for my critique of this theory.

<sup>491</sup> Murray 2004, 16; cf. Murray 1974, 68–70, 77–8.

<sup>492</sup> Plisch 2008, 64 and 198 (cf. Schenke 2012, 882–3), argues that the noun ܐܪܬܐ in sayings 13 and 88 means “messenger” rather than “angel,” but his arguments do not seem appealing. First, since some angels are evil (Matt 25:41), there is no reason why the others cannot be called “just” (saying 13). Second, ܐܪܬܐ ܡܢ ܝܗܘܕܝܬܐ is not necessarily equivalent to οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ προφῆται of Did. 11:3.

<sup>493</sup> In this respect, *Thomas* 13:2 is similar to *Thomas* 114:1, where Peter also expresses an inadequate opinion that is later corrected by Jesus; cf. Uro 2003, 90.

<sup>494</sup> The same idea seems to be present in saying 52, where “twenty-four prophets” probably stand for the Hebrew Scriptures; see Miroshnikov 2012, 183.

progress, but its outcome. Finally, in light of the fact that physical standing was generally associated with worship and prayer,<sup>495</sup> it is quite telling that the Thomasine attitude towards prayer is profoundly negative: Jesus refuses to fast and pray in saying 104, even claiming that prayer leads to condemnation in *Thomas* 14:2.<sup>496</sup>

Third, there is no reason to suppose that sayings 16, 23, 49, and 75 are somehow connected to baptism. Although Jonathan Z. Smith and several other scholars after him have tried to place a number of Thomasine sayings, especially saying 37,<sup>497</sup> within a baptismal context, their attempts were hardly successful.<sup>498</sup> Moreover, as Risto Uro has pointed out, some of Thomasine regulations seem to be incompatible with any “type of baptismal process we know about from other first- and second-century sources.”<sup>499</sup> For instance, while Did. 7:4 exhorts the one being baptized to fast one or two days prior to his or her baptism, *Thomas* 14:1 claims that fasting is sinful.

## 8.2. The Varieties of “Standing” in *Thomas*

The expression  $\omega\epsilon\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau\epsilon$  is used seven times in the Coptic *Thomas*, viz. in sayings 16, 18, 23, 28, 50, 75, and 99. Since the Coptic text of *Thomas* is a translation from Greek, it seems necessary to discuss the terminology employed in the Greek *Vorlage* of *Thomas* before proceeding to the analysis of Thomasine “standing.”

In the vast majority of instances where the Sahidic New Testament reads  $\lambda\epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau\epsilon$  (in Sahidic Coptic, the stative form  $\lambda\epsilon$  is often used instead of the infinitive form  $\omega\epsilon\epsilon$ ), the Greek text reads  $\iota\sigma\tau\eta\mu\iota$ .<sup>500</sup> There is little doubt that, as a rule,  $\omega\epsilon\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau\epsilon$  in Coptic texts renders  $\iota\sigma\tau\eta\mu\iota$  in their Greek *Vorlagen*.

The same certainly holds true for *Thomas* for the following reasons. First, P. Oxy. 1 preserves the beginning of the Greek text of saying 28, and there is no reason to doubt that it is identical to the *Vorlage* of the Coptic text:

*Thomas* 28:1 (P. Oxy. 1)

$\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\iota\ \iota\prime\text{Ι}(\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon)\varsigma\cdot\ \xi[\sigma]την\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \mu\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\iota\ \acute{\omega}\phi\theta\eta\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$

*Thomas* 28:1 (NHC II)

$\mu\epsilon\chi\epsilon\ \iota\bar{\omega}\ \chi\epsilon\ \delta\epsilon\iota\omega\chi\epsilon\ \epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\ \epsilon\bar{\nu}\ \tau\mu\eta\tau\epsilon\ \bar{\eta}\pi\kappa\omicron\varsigma\mu\omicron\varsigma\ \delta\gamma\omega\ \delta\epsilon\iota\omicron\gamma\omega\nu\eta\ \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda\ \mu\alpha\chi\ \epsilon\bar{\nu}\ \varsigma\alpha\rho\chi$

Second, the phrasing of *Thomas* 99:1 is remarkably similar to that of Matt 12:47 and Luke 8:20. The expression  $\lambda\epsilon\pi\alpha\tau\tau\epsilon$  in the Sahidic version of Luke 8:20 corresponds to  $\iota\sigma\tau\eta\mu\iota$  in the Greek text, so we can be fairly certain that the same Greek verb was used in the *Vorlage* of *Thomas*. The following synoptic table compares *Thomas* 99:1 only with Luke 8:20, because the Sahidic New Testament, as well as a few other important witnesses, omits Matt 12:47.<sup>501</sup>

<sup>495</sup> Cf. Williams 1985, 91.

<sup>496</sup> For a detailed analysis of these sayings, see Marjanen 1998b, 170–2.

<sup>497</sup> See Smith 1978, 1–23; Davies 1983, 117–37; MacDonald 1987, 50–63.

<sup>498</sup> See the discussion in Uro 2003, 70–2.

<sup>499</sup> Uro 2003, 72.

<sup>500</sup> See Wilmet 1957–1959, 2:1155–60.

<sup>501</sup> It is worth noting that, since Matt 12:47 is necessary to the flow of the narrative, it must have been in the original text. Metzger 1994, 26–7, argues that it “apparently was accidentally omitted because of homoeoteleuton”: verses 12:46 and 12:47 both end with  $\lambda\alpha\lambda\eta\sigma\alpha\iota$ .

Luke 8:20 (NA <sup>28</sup> )	Luke 8:20 (sa 1)	Thomas 99:1
ἀπηγγέλη δὲ αὐτῷ·	ΔΥΧΙ ΠΟΥΩ ΔΕ ΝΑϞ ΧΕ	ΠΕΧΕ Μ̅ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΑϞ ΧΕ
ἡ μήτηρ σου καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοί σου	ΤΕΚΜΑΔΥ Μ̅Ν ΝΕΚΣΝΗΟΥ	ΝΕΚΣΝΗ Μ̅Ν ΤΕΚΜΑΔΥ
<u>ἑστήκασιν</u> ἔξω	ΔΡΕΡΑΤΟΥ ϞΙ ΠCΑ ΒΒΟΛ	<u>CΕΔΡΕΡΑΤΟΥ</u> ϞΙ ΠCΑ ΝΒΟΛ
ιδεῖν θέλοντές σε	ΕΥΟΥΕΩ ΝΑΥ ΕΡΟΚ <sup>502</sup>	

I proceed now to the discussion of the various aspects of the meaning of “standing” in *Thomas*. It is evident that neither Greek ἵστημι nor Coptic ωρε ερατ= has only a single meaning. It is the context rather that determines if it is to be understood either literally or figuratively.

I suggest that ωρε ερατ= denotes one of the three following kinds of “standing” in *Thomas*: (a) literal standing, (b) standing as presenting or revealing oneself, and (c) transcendental standing.

### 8.2.1. Literal Standing in Sayings 99 and 75

It is fairly obvious that ωρε ερατ= in *Thomas* 99:1 refers to literal standing. *Thomas* 99:1 serves as the narrative framework for *Thomas* 99:2–3. When the disciples mention his relatives standing outside, Jesus uses this opportunity to define who his real relatives are:

99:1 ΠΕΧΕ Μ̅ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΝΑϞ ΧΕ ΝΕΚΣΝΗ Μ̅Ν ΤΕΚΜΑΔΥ CΕΔΡΕΡΑΤΟΥ ϞΙ ΠCΑ ΝΒΟΛ 99:2 ΠΕΧΑϞ ΝΑΥ ΧΕ ΝΕΤ̅Ν̅ΕCΙΜΑ Ε̅Ρ̅Ρ̅Ε Μ̅ΠΟΥΩΩ Μ̅ΠΑCΙΩΤ ΝΑCΙ ΝΕ ΝΑCΝΗ Μ̅Ν ΤΑΜΑΔΥ 99:3 Ἰ̅Τ̅ΟΟΥ ΠΕ Ε̅Τ̅ΝΑΒΩΚ Ε̅Ρ̅ΟΥΝ Ε̅Τ̅Μ̅Τ̅ΕΡΟ Μ̅ΠΑCΙΩΤ

99:1 The disciples said to him: “Your brothers and your mother are standing outside.” 99:2 He said to them: “Those here, who do the will of my Father—they are my brothers and my mother. 99:3 They are the ones who will enter the kingdom of my Father.”

As Stephen J. Patterson has pointed out, *Thomas* 99:3 is the Thomasine addition to its source.<sup>503</sup> Although this addition does not contribute much to the content of the saying, it certainly refines its literary form: while *Thomas* 99:1 and 99:2 contrast blood relatives with spiritual ones, *Thomas* 99:1 and 99:3 contrast those who “stand outside” with those who “go inside” (βωκ εξοϞν). Thus, “standing outside” is meant literally in *Thomas* 99:1 and then reinterpreted allegorically as spiritual imperfection in *Thomas* 99:3.

In a similar fashion, ωρε ερατ= refers to literal standing in saying 75. Quite remarkably, saying 75, just like saying 99, contrasts “standing outside” with “going inside”:

<sup>502</sup> Quecke 1977, 156.

<sup>503</sup> See Patterson 1993, 68. Whether saying 99 is dependent on the Synoptic tradition or draws on a source that was parallel to it is a matter of debate. Patterson 1993, 67–8, champions *Thomas*’ independence from the Synoptics; Gathercole 2012, 196–8, argues against it. I am inclined to agree with Kloppenborg 2014, 213, who has recently called Gathercole’s arguments into question and concluded that saying 99 may well represent “an independent performance of the saying.”

75 πεδεε ις ουν εαρ ερεατου γιρῆ προ αλλα ἡμοναχος μετναβωκ εζογν επιμα ἡωελεετ

75 Jesus said, “Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber” (trans. T. O. Lambdin).

That “standing” here is meant literally and is not used in a technical sense can be demonstrated by a proof by contradiction of the opposite statement, viz. that “standing” would be used technically. Bumazhnov has recently suggested that saying 75 refers to “religiously motivated standing.”<sup>504</sup> His hypothesis is based on the observation that saying 75, along with *Thomas* 16:4 and 23:2, depicts “single ones” as “standing.” Since “standing” in *Thomas* 16:4 and 23:2 appears to have a technical or semi-technical meaning, this may also be the case with saying 75.

This suggestion is, however, problematic. While sayings 16:4 and 23:2 associate “standing” with being either ογα ογωτ or μοναχός, saying 75 claims that standing at the door of the bridal chamber is the lot of those who are not μοναχοί.

Moreover, as I have pointed out in the previous chapter, saying 75 belongs to the thematic unit of sayings 73, 74, and 75. Each of these sayings is built on a particular metaphor (73: religious instruction is the gathering of the harvest; 74: entering the world is diving into a well; 75: salvation is entering a bridal chamber), and each contrasts the many with the few. “Standing” in saying 75 should thus be seen as the vehicle of the saying’s metaphorical language: while the grooms, i.e. the μοναχοί, enter the bridal chamber, the suitors, i.e. the spiritually weak, stand outside.

One may even conclude that “standing” plays no meaningful role in this metaphor: the saying simply emphasizes the fact that the suitors are not allowed to go inside the bridal chamber; it does not elaborate on the things they are doing outside. Indeed, while, as I have already pointed out, ωρε ερατς usually renders ἵστημι, there are notable exceptions to the rule. According to Crum,<sup>505</sup> ερεατς in the Sahidic Bible occasionally renders εἰμί (see Num 5:13, Isa 14:13, and Wis 9:9). The most remarkable example, not listed by Crum,<sup>506</sup> is the Sahidic version of Mark 15:40:

Mark 15:40 (NA<sup>28</sup>)

ἦσαν δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι

Mark 15:40 (sa 1)

νεγῆ ρενριومه<sup>507</sup> λε ερεατου ἡπογε  
εγσωτ<sup>508</sup>

We may very well encounter a similar phenomenon in saying 75, in which case “standing” would be an irrelevant detail, just like it is irrelevant here in the Sahidic version of Mark 15:40. Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to reconstruct the exact phrasing of the lost Greek *Vorlage* of saying 75. Even so, while one may suspect that in this particular case ωρε ερατς renders Greek εἰμί, ἵστημι at least appears to be a better candidate, because it contributes to the antithetic structure of the saying.

<sup>504</sup> Bumazhnov 2011, 77.

<sup>505</sup> See Crum 1939, 537b.

<sup>506</sup> I borrow it from Wilmet 1957–1959, 2:1156.

<sup>507</sup> It should be noted that at least one manuscript, sa 16L, reads νεγῆ ροιμε; see Balestri 1970, 135. This reading must be regarded as a corruption of νεγῆ ρενριومه.

<sup>508</sup> Quecke 1972, 176.

There are three pairs of opposites that are contrasted here: first, the few (ἡμίονος) and the many (πᾶς); second, being inside the bridal chamber and being at its door; third, going and standing. “Standing,” therefore, should be regarded as an important antithetical component of the parallel structure of the saying.

What is quite remarkable is that in both cases where “standing” is meant literally (Jesus’ relatives standing outside in saying 99 and suitors standing at the door of the bridal chamber in saying 75), it is associated with being “outside” and contrasted to “going inside.” Moreover, in both cases this literal standing is allegorically interpreted as spiritual imperfection, which prevents an individual from being saved, and, in turn, is contrasted with cases where “standing” is meant metaphorically, referring to divine stability (see the discussion of sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 in section 8.4, below).

### 8.2.2. “Standing” as Presenting or Revealing Oneself in Saying 28

In saying 28, “standing” has a different meaning. As I have already pointed out, thanks to P. Oxy. 1, the beginning of the saying is preserved in Greek. BDAG mentions *Thomas* 28:1 among the examples where the verb ἵστημι means “to come up in the presence of others,” “to appear.”<sup>509</sup> Quite remarkable, ἵστημι ἐν μέσῳ, the very same expression we encounter in P. Oxy. 1, occurs in other early Christian texts in similar contexts.<sup>510</sup> What is perhaps even more important for the present discussion is that both *Thomas* 28:1 and *Thomas* 28:2 have an obvious parallel structure:

28:1a πεχε ἰϥ χε δειωρε ερατ ρῆ τμητε ἡπκοσμος 28:1b αγω δειογωνε εβολ ναγ ρῆ καρζ  
28:2a δειρε εροογ τηρογ εγταρε 28:2b ἡπιρε ελααγ ἡρητογ εροβε

28:1a λέγει Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς· ἔ[σ]την ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ κόσμου 28:1b καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ ὥφθην αὐτοῖς 28:2a καὶ εὔρον πάντας μεθύοντας 28:2b καὶ οὐδένα εὔρον δειψῶ(ν)τα ἐν αὐτοῖς

28:1a Jesus says: “I stood in the middle of the world, 28:1b and in flesh I appeared to them. 28:2a I found all of them drunk. 28:2b None of them did I find thirsty.”

Both *Thomas* 28:1 and 28:2 comprise two sentences that use different yet not dissimilar phrasing to make the same point. “Everyone” and “being intoxicated” in *Thomas* 28:2a correspond to “none of them” and “being thirsty” in *Thomas* 28:2b. In a similar manner, *Thomas* 28:1 parallels “being in the middle of the world” (28:1a) and “being in flesh” (28:1b), as well as “standing” (28:1a) and “being visible” (28:1b).<sup>511</sup>

Thus, the literary structure of *Thomas* 28:1–2 indicates that in this saying ἵστημι designates presenting or even revealing oneself, as it does in the other examples listed in BDAG, s.v. ἵστημι (B.2).

<sup>509</sup> Cf. Robbins 2013, 132.

<sup>510</sup> See BDAG, s.v. ἵστημι (B.2).

<sup>511</sup> Cf. Jeremias 1958, 71.

### 8.2.3. Transcendental “Standing” in Sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50

It is now time to turn to the notion of “standing” in sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50. As Williams has pointed out, the verb ἵστημι “has a long history in the Greek literature as a technical term for Rest (vs. Motion).”<sup>512</sup> A number of Middle Platonists and Platonizing authors used this verb to describe stability as an attribute of ultimate reality and, consequently, stability as human perfection. In what follows, I argue that ὡς ἐρατὲς in sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 should be interpreted against the background of this Platonist notion of transcendental “standing.”

### 8.3. Platonists on Transcendental “Standing”

Before I discuss the notion of transcendental “standing” in *Thomas*, I would like to outline the history of the use of the term among Platonists. I will start with Plato and then discuss the Middle Platonists: Alcinous, Philo, Numenius, and Clement of Alexandria.

#### 8.3.1. Plato

It is worth noting that Plato himself did not often use the verb ἵστημι to describe noetic stability. Williams refers to the following two Platonic passages in his monograph:<sup>513</sup>

These forms are like patterns set in nature (τὰ μὲν εἶδη ταῦτα ὥσπερ παραδείγματα ἐστάναι ἐν τῇ φύσει), and other things resemble them and are likenesses; and this partaking of the forms is, for the other things, simply being modeled on them (*Parm.* 132d; trans. M. L. Gill and P. Ryan).

My friend, there are two patterns set up in reality (παραδειγμάτων ἐν τῷ ὄντι ἐστώτων). One is divine and supremely happy; the other has nothing of God in it, and is the pattern of the deepest unhappiness (*Theaet.* 176e–177a; trans. M. J. Levett and M. Burnyeat).

The problem with these two passages (*pace* Williams) is that, though they apply the verb ἵστημι to the forms and patterns, it is doubtful whether this verb describes their immovability. In both cases, stability of the noetic realm is hardly the issue; the emphasis is not on “standing” (as opposed to “movement”), but rather on “being.” According to LSJ, s.v. ἵστημι (B.I.1), this verb is often used as “merely a stronger form of εἶναι, *to be* in a certain place or state” (hence, Plato’s modifiers ἐν τῇ φύσει and ἐν τῷ ὄντι). I am inclined to think that the translations quoted above render these two passages quite accurately.

Moreover, in *Sophista*, where ἵστημι does refer to stability, Plato seems to decline to use the term with regard to ultimate reality:

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<sup>512</sup> Williams 1985, 39.

<sup>513</sup> Williams 1985, 41.



VISITOR: But for heaven's sake, are we going to be convinced that it's true that change (κίνησις), life, soul, and intelligence are not present in that which wholly is (τὸ παντελῶς ὄν), and that it neither lives nor thinks, but stays changeless, solemn, and holy, without any understanding (σεμνὸν καὶ ἅγιον, νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, ἀκίνητον ἐστὸς εἶναι)?

THEAETETUS: If we did, sir, we'd be admitting something frightening (*Soph.* 248e–249a; trans. N. P. White).

Although Plato does not apply the verb ἵστημι in its technical sense to the noetic realm, the myth Socrates narrates in *Phaedrus* portrays the perfect souls, i.e. gods, as “standing” on the back of heaven, τὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ νῶτον. This myth describes the procession of gods led by Zeus and headed toward the place beyond heaven, ὁ ὑπερουράνιος τόπος. Once they have completed their ascent, they devote themselves to the contemplation of true being, ἡ οὐσία ὄντως οὐσα (*Phaedr.* 247b–c):<sup>514</sup>

But when the souls we call immortals reach the top (ἄκρος), they move outward and take their stand on the high ridge of heaven (ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τῷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ νώτῳ), where its circular motion (ἡ περιφορά) carries them around as they stand (σταῖσαι) while they gaze (θεωροῦσι) upon what is outside heaven (trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff).

While “standing” here is meant literally, the image of the divine souls “taking their stand” on the heaven is probably not supposed to be taken at face value, rather serving as an allegory. As Williams has pointed out, in his myth “Plato stresses the antithesis between the realm of stability and the realm of confusion and disturbance.”<sup>515</sup> The contemplation of true being, enjoyed by the divine souls, is contrasted with the constant struggle between the “charioteer” and his “horses,” i.e. the antagonistic forces of the human soul. This struggle brings about “disorder, conflict, and excessive sweat (θόρυβος καὶ ἄμιλλα καὶ ἰδρώς ἔσχατος)” (248b). It follows, then, that the “standing” of gods hints at their stability as opposed to the endless unrest of human souls.

### 8.3.2. Alcinous

Unlike Plato, the Middle Platonists did not have any reservations with regard to transcendental “standing.” A graphic example of this remarkable shift comes from Alcinous. One of the sections of his handbook (10.4) “is devoted to an exposition of the ‘negative’ method (κατὰ ἀφαίρεσιν) for attaining an understanding of the nature of God.”<sup>516</sup> In the final remark of this section, Alcinous makes a striking revision of *Parm.* 139b.<sup>517</sup> While, according to the first hypothesis of Plato’s *Parmenides*, the One (τὸ ἓν) “is neither at rest nor in motion (οὔτε ἔστηκεν οὔτε κινεῖται)” (139b; trans.

<sup>514</sup> This passage has two remarkable parallels in Plato’s corpus. First, Plato makes the same connection between literal standing and contemplation in his accounts of Socrates’ trance-like states in *Symp.* 175a–b and 220c–d. Second, Plato’s description of gods standing on heaven while they are carried around by its revolution is reminiscent of *Tim.* 40a–b, where “the heavenly race of gods (οὐράνιον θεῶν γένος),” i.e. the fixed stars, follows two motions, axial rotation and circular revolution (cf. Taylor 1928, 225), but is “immovable and stationary (ἀκίνητον καὶ ἐστὸς)” with respect to the other five motions.

<sup>515</sup> Williams 1985, 75.

<sup>516</sup> Dillon 1993a, 107.

<sup>517</sup> Cf. Dillon 1993a, 108.

M. L. Gill and P. Ryan), Alcinous declares that God (“the first intellect,” ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς, and “the first god,” ὁ πρῶτος θεός) “neither moves anything, nor is himself in motion (οὔτε κινεῖ οὔτε κινεῖται)” (*Didasc.* 10.4).

The readers of the handbook might be surprised to learn that God bears no relationship to motion, since, earlier (10.2), Alcinous attributes to God the characteristics of the Aristotelian “unmoved first mover,” τὸ πρῶτον κινουὺν ἀκίνητον (*Phys.* 267b; *Metaph.* 1012b; 1074a).<sup>518</sup> It is worth noting that Alcinous does not contradict himself. According to him, “the mind of the whole heaven,” ὁ νοῦς τοῦ σύμπαντος οὐρανοῦ, is moved by God in the same way that “desire,” ἡ ὀρεξις, is moved by “an object of desire,” τὸ ὀρεκτόν.<sup>519</sup> The cosmic mind is moved not by God, but rather by its own longing for God,<sup>520</sup> from which premise Alcinous concludes that God does not move anything.<sup>521</sup>

Yet, for the purposes of the present discussion, what Alcinous does not say is more relevant than what he does. Unlike Plato, he does not claim that God is not at rest. On the contrary, throughout his handbook, Alcinous describes God as motionless, ἀκίνητος. As John Whittaker pointed out, Alcinous revised Plato’s formula in order to bring it into accordance with the Middle Platonist conviction that supreme reality is immovable.<sup>522</sup> Alcinous does not speak about transcendental “standing,” but this passage from his handbook explains why others did.

### 8.3.3. Philo

As Williams has pointed out, it is in the works of Philo that we find the well-established usage of the term ἵστημι “as a description of the transcendent realm.”<sup>523</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that scholars are often bewildered by Philo’s theoretical inconsistency and terminological carelessness. According to E. R. Dodds, “Any attempt to extract a coherent system from Philo seems to me foredoomed to failure; his eclecticism is that of the jackdaw rather than the philosopher.”<sup>524</sup> It is, therefore, all the more significant that Philo appears to be remarkably consistent when he speaks about divine immovability and transcendental “standing.”<sup>525</sup>

Just like “the first intellect” of Alcinous, Philo’s God is the Aristotelian “first mover”: “that which is [i.e. God] moves and turns all else, but is itself exempt from movement and turning (τὸ ὄν τὸ τὰ ἄλλα κινουὺν καὶ τρέπον ἀκίνητόν τε καὶ ἄτρεπτον)” (*Post.* 28; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, altered). Elsewhere, Philo makes the same point, saying that God moves everything, though He is “the one who always stands,” ὁ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ ἐστώς (*Mut.* 54).<sup>526</sup> The paradox of divine immovability, Philo says, is that “whereas the heavenly bodies as they go past moving objects (τὰ

<sup>518</sup> Cf. Dillon 1996, 283.

<sup>519</sup> As Dillon 1993a, 103, points out, this is one of the “salient features” from Aristotle’s “unmoved mover” that Alcinous grants to his God (cf. *Metaph.* 1072b: God moves “by being loved,” ὡς ἐρώμενον).

<sup>520</sup> Cf. Dörrie et al. 2008, 328–9; Alt 1996, 15.

<sup>521</sup> Cf. Dörrie et al. 2008, 337: “Gott bewegt *nicht* so, daß er dabei selbst bewegt bzw. verändert würde. In *diesem* Sinne ist ihm Bewegen und Bewegtwerden abzusprechen.”

<sup>522</sup> Cf. Whittaker 1976, 158.

<sup>523</sup> Williams 1985, 42.

<sup>524</sup> Dodds 1928, 132.

<sup>525</sup> For some discussions of transcendental “standing” in Philo, see, for instance, Pascher 1931, 228–38; Völker 1938, 326–7; Williams 1985, 25–7, 42–3, 76; cf. Walter Grundmann, “στήκω, ἵστημι,” *TDNT* 7:644–5.

<sup>526</sup> Unfortunately, the Greek text of this sentence is corrupt, but the underlying idea is clear.

κινούμενα) are themselves in motion (κινούμενοι), God who outstrips them all is motionless (ἑστώς)” (*Post.* 19; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

“The standing one,” ἑστώς, is one of Philo’s favorite epithets of God that refers to the divine stability (see, e.g., *Somn.* 1.246; 2.221; *Mut.* 57). It is this stability that is implied whenever the Pentateuch speaks of God “taking His stand.” For instance, εἰστήκει in Exod 24:10 is Moses’ testimony to God’s immutability, τὸ μὴ τρέπεσθαι τὸ θεῖον, “for by the standing (στάσις) or establishment (ἰδρυσις) he indicates His immutability (τὸ μὴ μεταβάλλειν)” (*Somn.* 2.222; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

Divine “standing” is eternal: “for in God’s case standing is not a future but an ever present act (οὐ γὰρ στήσεται ὁ θεός, ἀλλ’ αἰεὶ ἕστηκεν)” (*Post.* 30; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker). It is also autonomous: nobody should think that something assists God in standing firm, τὸ παγίως στήναι (*Somn.* 1.158).

Stability is inherent to other divine entities as well. “Standing,” στάσις, is the prerogative of both that which is (τὸ ὄν) and its word (ὁ τοῦ ὄντος λόγος), “which it calls its covenant (διαθήκη)” (*Somn.* 2.237; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, altered). Elsewhere, Philo says that chance, τὸ τυχερόν, should be subordinate to wisdom, τὸ φρόνιμον, “since the unstable (τὸ ἄστατον) ought to be guided on its course by the stable (τὸ ἑστώς)” (*Mut.* 91; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

“Standing” is what distinguishes God from his creation. According to Philo, “quiescence and standing are characteristic of God, but change of place and all movement that makes for such change is characteristic of creation (θεοῦ μὲν ἴδιον ἡρεμία καὶ στάσις, γενέσεως δὲ μετάβασίς τε καὶ μεταβατική πᾶσα κίνησις)” (*Post.* 29; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, altered). When Abraham falls on his face (Gen 17:3) before “the standing one,” he intends to demonstrate that, unlike God, he “is never firmly set in a stable position (οὐδέποτε ἐν ταύτῳ βεβαίως ἰδρυμένος)” (*Mut.* 55; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

According to *QG* 1.42, humankind had stability and immovability “before there was any tasting of evil,” i.e. before the Fall, and lost it “after they had come into association with deceit” (trans. R. Marcus). At the same time, as they ceased to be immovable, they started to live under the delusion that there was alteration and change in God himself.

Only the most advanced human being, the sage (ὁ σοφός), can regain this stability that was so tragically lost. In *Somn.* 2.219 (cf. 2.297; *Leg.* 3.71; 3.204), Philo alludes to Plato’s enigmatic statement in *Tim.* 53d.<sup>527</sup> According to Plato, there are principles, ἀρχαί, that are more ultimate than the triangles, but they “are known only to God and to men who are His friends (ἀνδρῶν δὲ ἂν ἐκείνῳ φίλος ᾖ),” i.e. to philosophers.<sup>528</sup> According to Philo, when the Pharaoh in Gen 41:17 says, “I thought I stood (ᾤμην ἐστάναι),” he reveals his ignorance of the fact that “to be unswerving and stable belongs only to God and to such as are the friends of God (μόνον θεῷ τὸ ἀκλινὲς καὶ πάγιόν ἐστιν οἰκεῖον καὶ εἴ τις αὐτῷ φίλος)” (trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker). Thus, Philo’s “friends of God,” the sages,<sup>529</sup> not only know that God is free from alteration, but are also themselves immovable.

<sup>527</sup> Cf. Amir 1983, 204; Winston and Dillon 1983, 261. It is worth noting that the notion of “God’s friend (φίλος θεοῦ)” frequently occurs in the works of Philo. This Philonic notion is inspired not only by *Timaeus*, but also by the biblical passages like Exod 33:11 LXX (see *Mos.* 1.156; cf. *Sacr.* 130; *Ebr.* 94).

<sup>528</sup> Cf. Taylor 1928, 364.

<sup>529</sup> See *Her.* 21: οἱ σοφοὶ πάντες φίλοι θεοῦ, “all the sages are God’s friends.”

As Harold Tarrant has pointed out, *ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν*, “becoming as like God as possible” (Plato, *Theaet.* 176b; trans. M. J. Levett and M. Burnyeat), is “the standard goal of Middle Platonism.”<sup>530</sup> Philo is no exception to this rule. It is through the assimilation to God that one acquires immutability:

Proximity to a stable object (*τὸ ἐστῶς*) produces a desire to be like it (*ὁμοιότητος ἐφίεσθαι*) and a longing for quiescence (*ἡρεμία*). Now that which is unwaveringly stable (*τὸ ἀκλινῶς ἐστῶς*) is God, and that which is subject to movement (*τὸ κινητόν*) is creation (*γένεσις*). He therefore that draws nigh to God (*ὁ προσίων θεῷ*) longs for stability (*στάσις*), but he that forsakes Him, inasmuch as he approaches the unresting creation (*γενέσει τῇ τρεπομένη προσίων*) is, as we might expect, carried about (*Post.* 23; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

According to Philo’s vivid simile, God is like a straightedge, *κανών*, to a person that wants to assimilate to Him: just as a straightedge straightens crooked objects, so also God makes moving objects immovable.

Stability (*στάσις*) and immutable quiescence (*ἡρεμία ἀκλινής*) are those which we experience at the side of God, who Himself always stands immutable (*παρὰ τὸν ἀκλινῶς ἐστῶτα αἰεὶ θεόν*), for a correct straightedge (*ὕγιής κανών*) necessarily straightens all that is set beside it (*τὰ παρατιθέμενα*) (*Gig.* 49; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, altered).

For I take it that, just as crooked things are straightened by a true straightedge (*κανὼν ὀρθός*), so moving things (*τὰ κινούμενα*) are brought to a stop and made stationary (*ἵσταται*) by the force of the standing one (*ὁ ἐστῶς*) (*Post.* 28; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, altered).

As Williams has pointed out, with regard to achieving immutability, Philo considered two figures from Israel’s history as paradigmatic, Abraham and Moses.<sup>531</sup> Whenever the Pentateuch mentions their “standing,” it in fact refers to their immovability. While Jacob received his new name from an angel, it was the unchanging God (*ὁ ἄτρεπτος θεός*) himself who gave Abraham his new name (Gen 17:5). God did it in order that “the standing he was about to receive” (*τὸ μέλλον στησεσθαι*) might be firmly established by “the one who stands and is always the same” (*ὁ ἐστῶς καὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχων*) (*Mut.* 87). When the Pentateuch says that Abraham “was standing before the Lord” (Gen 18:22), it means that he had an unchanging soul (*ἄτρεπτος ψυχή*), and, when it says that he “drew near” (Gen 18:23), it implies that only an unchanging soul stands (*ἵσταται*) near the standing God (*ὁ ἐστῶς θεός*) (*Post.* 27).

In a similar fashion, “the always-standing God” (*ὁ ἐστῶς αἰεὶ θεός*) honored Moses with a gift akin to His “entirely unswerving and unwavering power” (*ἡ ἀκλινής καὶ ἀρρεπὴς πρὸς πάντα δύναμις*). Thus, when He says to Moses, “Stand here with me” (Deut 5:31), He is commanding him to put off the dispositions of the unstable soul (*ἀβεββαίου ψυχῆς διαθέσεις*), i.e. doubt and hesitation, and to put

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<sup>530</sup> Tarrant 2007, 419.

<sup>531</sup> See Williams 1985, 27.

on the firmest and most constant disposition (ἡ ὀχυρωτάτη καὶ βεβαιοτάτη διάθεσις), i.e. faith (*Conf.* 30–1).

The last quoted passage is of special interest, since it explains what transcendental “standing” means with regard to human individuals. Faith, in the sense of firm conviction, is that which distinguishes a sage, like Abraham or Moses, from a fool (ὁ ἄφρων); it is in the nature of the latter “never to plant himself firmly and fixedly on any principle” (ἐπὶ μηδενὸς ἐστάναι παγίως καὶ ἐρηρεῖσθαι δόγματος) (*Post.* 24; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker; cf. *Leg.* 3.53).

Other important aspects of transcendental “standing” are quiescence (ἡρεμία) (see, e.g., *Deus* 23), peace (εἰρήνη) (*Somn.* 2.229), and tranquility or inner calm (εὐστάθεια) (*Post.* 28), enjoyed by the “standing” sage. The latter term deserves additional commentary. According to BDAG, s.v. εὐστάθεια, it is “a favorite term for describing stable political conditions.” Others have pointed out that, in applying the term εὐστάθεια to the human soul, Philo follows a well-established philosophical tradition that goes back to Democritus.<sup>532</sup> What is remarkable about Philo’s use of the term is that he associates it with the transcendental “standing,” which, of course, comes as no surprise, since εὐστάθεια and ἵστημι derive from the same root.

In the Philonic corpus, εὐστάθεια denotes both the tranquility of the state (see, e.g., *Flacc.* 94) and that of the soul. The inner εὐστάθεια is a natural product of piety (εὐσέβεια) (*Conf.* 132). Along with εὐνομία, “good order,” εὐστάθεια springs from education (παιδεία) and virtue (ἀρετή) (*Post.* 118).

The soul’s tranquility (εὐστάθεια) is far more important than that of the state. In a similar fashion, the riot (στάσις) in the soul is far more dangerous than that in the state (Philo’s word play seems to be intentional). God, according to Philo, “rejoices at the firm establishment of good order and tranquility (εὐνομίας καὶ εὐσταθείας βεβαίωσις), at the abolishing of wars and riots (στάσεις), not only those which occur between cities, but also of those that arise in the soul; and these are greater and more serious than those, for they outrage reason, a more divine faculty than others within us” (*Post.* 184; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, altered). In fact, political unrest is a mere imitation of the restlessness of the soul; the former will vanish as soon as the latter is no more:

From this it appears that states would have done rightly if before bringing against one another arms and engines of war, with the enslavement and complete overthrow of the enemy in view, they had prevailed on their citizens one by one to put an end to the riot (στάσις) which abounds within himself, and which is so great and unceasing. For, to be honest, this is the original (ἀρχέτυπον) of all wars. If this be abolished, neither will those occur which still break out in imitation (κατὰ μίμησιν) of it, but the human race will attain to the experience and enjoyment of profound peace (βαθεῖα εἰρήνη), taught by the law of nature, namely virtue, to honour God and to be occupied with His service, for this is the source of long life and happiness (πηγὴ εὐδαιμονίας καὶ βίου μακράωνος) (*Post.* 185; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

The concluding remark of this passage brings up the last but not the least important aspect of Philo’s notion of εὐστάθεια: the soul’s tranquility results in happiness, εὐδαιμονία. The same holds true for transcendental “standing.” The “standing” sage, according to Philo, is near divine happiness (θείας

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<sup>532</sup> See Amir 1983, 201–3; Winston and Dillon 1983, 261–2.

εὐδαιμονίας ἐγγύς) (*Cher.* 19). An unidentified Greek fragment from *QE* (fr. 12 Petit) puts it even more emphatically: “Unswerving and unwavering standing in God alone is the consummation of happiness (πέρας εὐδαιμονίας τὸ ἀκλινῶς καὶ ἀρρεπῶς ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ στήναι).”

#### 8.3.4. Numenius

A short comment on Numenius’ Platonism should perhaps precede the discussion of his notion of noetic stability. As John Dillon has pointed out, one of the distinctive features of Numenius’ metaphysics is “the distinction made between the Supreme God and the Demiurge.”<sup>533</sup> Numenius calls his supreme god “the first god,” ὁ πρῶτος θεός (fr. 11–3; 15–6 des Places), and “the first mind,” ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς (fr. 17 des Places), identifying him with “that which is,” τὸ ὄν (fr. 2–4a; 5–8 des Places), and “the Good,” τὸ ἀγαθόν (fr. 2; 16; 19–20 des Places).<sup>534</sup>

Another distinctive feature of Numenius’ philosophy is its “marked dualism.”<sup>535</sup> Matter and the first god are “completely unrelated and eternally opposed principles.”<sup>536</sup> Thus, according to Calcidius’ report of Numenius’ doctrine, “God is the principle and cause of all good, matter of all evil” (fr. 52 des Places = Calcidius, *Comm. Tim.* 296; trans. J. C. M. van Winden).

Numenius’ dualism is manifest in his emphasis on noetic stability as opposed to the instability of the sensible realm. Quite a few surviving fragments of his lost work *De bono* employ the verb ἵστημι and describe this stability as transcendental “standing.”

According to Numenius, matter does not “stand” and, therefore, cannot be τὸ ὄν, “that which is”:

So it is well stated in the argument that, if matter (ἡ ὕλη) is infinite (ἄπειρος), it is undefined (ἀόριστος); and, if undefined, irrational (ἄλογος); and, if irrational, it cannot be known (ἄγνωστος). But as it cannot be known it must necessarily be without order (ἄτακτος), as things arranged in order must certainly be easy to be known: and what is without order, is not stable (τὸ δὲ ἄτακτον οὐχ ἕστηκεν): and whatever is not stable cannot be that which is (ὅ τι δὲ μὴ ἕστηκεν, οὐκ ἂν εἴη ὄν) (fr. 4a des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.17.3; trans. E. H. Gifford, altered).

At the end of this fragment, Numenius concludes that “the only nature that stands (αὐτῇ ... φύσεων πασῶν μόνῃ ἕστηκεν)” is the incorporeal, τὸ ἀσώματον (fr. 4a des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 15.17.8). Later on, he identifies the incorporeal with “that which is” (fr. 6 des Places). The most detailed description of “that which is” is given in the following passage:

For that which is (τὸ ὄν) is eternal (αἰδίων) and constant (βέβαιον) and always remains the same (ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὸν καὶ ταὐτόν). It has not been generated and destroyed, nor increased and diminished: nor did it ever yet become more or less: and certainly neither in other senses nor

<sup>533</sup> Dillon 1996, 367.

<sup>534</sup> Cf. Dodds 1960, 12.

<sup>535</sup> Dillon 1996, 374.

<sup>536</sup> Turner 2001, 389.

yet locally will it be moved (*κινηθήσεται*). For it is not right for it to be moved, either backward or forward: nor upward ever, nor downward: neither to the right hand nor to the left shall that which is ever pass: nor shall it ever be moved around its own center; but rather it shall stand fast (*ἐστήξειται*), and shall be fixed and set firm (*ἀραρός τε καὶ ἐστηκός ἔσται*), ever in the same conditions and same mode (*κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἔχον αἰεὶ καὶ ὡσαύτως*) (fr. 5 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.10.4–5; trans. E. H. Gifford, altered).

Elsewhere, Numenius argues that, while that which is “remains the same and always stands” (*μένει κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔστηκε*), the corporeal realm is in flux (*ρεῖ*) and, therefore, is not (*οὐκ ἔστιν*) (fr. 8 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.10.12–3). Thus, “standing” is a distinctive feature of that which is; it is “standing” that distinguishes the noetic realm, which is, from matter, which is not.

The last passage by Numenius I would like to discuss deals with the appropriate ways to approach “the Good,” τὸ ἀγαθόν (which, as I have pointed out, is identical to “that which is,” τὸ ὄν). According to Numenius, “the Good” is incorporeal and, therefore, cannot be apprehended from any sensible object that resembles it (*ἀπὸ ὁμοίου αἰσθητοῦ*). Hence, one should

withdraw far from the things of sense, and commune with the Good one on one, where there is neither man nor any other living thing, nor body great or small, but a certain immense, indescribable, and absolutely divine solitude (*ἐρημία θεσπέσιος*), where there are the abodes, amusements, and splendors of the Good, and the Good itself, that which is quiescent (τὸ ἡρεμον), the guiding power, graciously floats upon being (*ἡ οὐσία*) in peace (*εἰρήνη*) and benevolence (fr. 2 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.22.1; trans. E. H. Gifford, altered).

As I have pointed out earlier, transcendental “standing” in the Philonic corpus is often associated with quiescence, *ἡρεμία*. According to Numenius, the supreme god himself (who is so consistently described as “standing”) is identical to τὸ ἡρεμον, “that which is quiescent.”<sup>537</sup> It is evident, therefore, that for both Philo and Numenius immovability is intimately related to tranquility and peace.<sup>538</sup>

### 8.3.5. Clement

The last figure that I would like to discuss in this survey is Clement. It is worth noting that Clement was familiar with Philo’s corpus. Since transcendental “standing” was one of Philo’s favorite topics, it comes as no surprise that “standing” comes up in a passage where Clement draws his material from Philo.

<sup>537</sup> Cf. Pépin 1992, 302.

<sup>538</sup> As Runia 1995, 200, points out, the similarity between Numenius’ and Philo’s treatment of the theme of transcendental “standing” is rather striking. It is worth noting that, while Philonic influence on Numenius is impossible to prove, we can be certain that Numenius read Jewish scriptures and gave them allegorical interpretation (fr. 1b des Places = Origen, *Cels.* 1.15; fr. 1c des Places = Origen, *Cels.* 4.51). It is possible, therefore, that in using “standing” as an epithet of God both Numenius and Philo were inspired by the same biblical passages, e.g. Exod 24:10.

As Annewies van den Hoek has pointed out, *Strom.* 2.11.51.3–52.1 is heavily dependent on *Post.* 22–8.<sup>539</sup> The following passage both illustrates Clement’s dependency on Philo and introduces the topic of divine immutability:

Philo, *Post.* 27

ὄντως γὰρ ἀτρέπτω ψυχῇ

πρὸς τὸν ἄτρεπτον θεὸν μόνῃ πρόσδοδος ἐστι

For access to the immutable God is only  
for a truly immutable soul.

Clement, *Strom.* 2.11.51.6

ὄντως γὰρ ἀτρέπτω

πρὸς τὸ ἄτρεπτον ἢ προσαγωγή

For approach to the immutable is for that  
which is truly immutable.

In the very next sentence (*Strom.* 2.11.52.1), Clement cites Gen 18:22 and Deut 5:31 as examples of this principle: “Hence (οὕτως), ‘Abraham was standing before the Lord and drew near, saying’ (Gen 18:22), and it is said to Moses, ‘Stand here with me’ (Deut 5:31).” Clement undoubtedly borrows both of these quotations from *Post.* 27–8, and, just like Philo, interprets them as references to transcendental “standing.”<sup>540</sup>

Moreover, Clement occasionally speaks of transcendental “standing” even when he is not borrowing from Philo. In *Strom.* 7.10.57.5, he says that when the Gnostic enters the Lord’s dwelling-place, he becomes “light that stands firm, always remains the same, and is absolutely and in every respect immutable,” φῶς ἐστὸς καὶ μένον ἀϊδίως, πάντῃ πάντως ἄτρεπτον. Notably, the passage in question begins with the description of spiritual progress as movement towards “the supreme place of repose (ὁ κορυφαῖος τῆς ἀναπαύσεως τόπος)” (*Strom.* 7.10.57.1). Like Philo and Numenius, Clement associates transcendental “standing” with tranquility.

Finally, it is worth noting that the passage quoted above (*Strom.* 7.10.57.5) is parallel to *Strom.* 1.24.163.6, where Clement speaks of “God’s stable permanence and his unchanging light, which no form can catch (τὸ ἐστὸς καὶ μόνιμον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ ἄτρεπτον αὐτοῦ φῶς καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον)” (trans. J. Ferguson). It is by no means a coincidence, then, that Clement’s understanding of human perfection is similar to his description of the deity. As Walther Völker points out, “Vergleicht man beide Stellen miteinander, so erkennt man sofort, daß Clemens vom Gläubigen eine ἐξομολῶσις πρὸς τὸν θεόν, eine Nachfolge Gottes, fordert und seine Schilderung des Gnostikers in enge Berührung mit dem Gottesgedanken bringt.”<sup>541</sup>

#### 8.4. Transcendental “Standing” in *Thomas*

I now proceed to a discussion of the impact of the Platonist notion of transcendental “standing” on *Thomas*. As I see it, there are two reasons why it is likely that Thomasine sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 allude to said notion.

(1) First, as I have tried to demonstrate in chapter 7, the motif of “becoming one” in *Thomas* 16:4 and 23:2 (quoted above) stems from Platonist metaphysics. Since “oneness” as perfection is a

<sup>539</sup> See van den Hoek 1988, 161–3.

<sup>540</sup> Cf. Williams 1985, 55.

<sup>541</sup> Völker 1952, 513.



Moreover, the association of “oneness” and “standing” appears to be quite natural for Platonist thought, since both “oneness” and “standing” are attributes of ultimate reality. As Williams has pointed out, Philo provides us with a good example of such an association.<sup>542</sup> In *Gig.* 52, Philo contrasts uttered speech with silent contemplation. “That which is in the form of utterance (τὸ μετὰ λόγου τοῦ κατὰ προφοράν)” (Philo borrowed this term from the Stoics; see *SVF* 2.135) is not constant (οὐ βέβαιον), because it is a dyad (δυάς). In contrast, “the speechless contemplation by soul alone of that which is (τὸ ἄνευ φωνῆς μόνῃ ψυχῇ τὸ ὄν θεωρεῖν)” is very firm (ἐχυρώτατον) because “it is made stationary in accordance with the indivisible monad (κατὰ τὴν ἀδιάλρετον ἴσταται μονάδα).”

The same divine qualities are attributed to the *μοναχοί* of saying 16 and to the chosen ones of saying 23. According to saying 23, the exceptional individuals whom Jesus deems worthy will, just like Philo's monad, enjoy oneness and stability:

1 Jesus says: “I will choose you, one from a thousand and two from ten thousand. 2 And they will stand as a single one.”

1 πεχε ις ξε ταχα ευηεεε ν̄σι ρ̄ρωμε ξε ν̄ταειει ανουξε ν̄ογειρηνн εξ̄ν κ̄κοςμος 2 ᾱω  
 σεσοογ̄н αν ξε ν̄ταειει ανουξε ν̄ρ̄ν̄πωρх εξ̄н κ̄καρ ο̄γκωρτ ο̄γснqe ο̄γπολεμος 3 ο̄γ̄н †ο̄γ  
 гар наωωρ̄πε ρ̄н ο̄γнeи ο̄γ̄н ωомт наωωρ̄пе εξ̄н снау а̄ω снау εξ̄н ωомт пeиωт εξ̄н п̄ωнre  
 а̄ω п̄ωнre εξ̄н пeиωт 4 а̄ω сeнаω̄pe epaтoγ̄ eyo μ̄monaxoc

In this saying, Jesus proclaims that he has come not “to cast peace (οἰρηνην) upon the earth” (16:1) but “to cast dissension upon the earth: fire, sword, (and) war (οἰπολεμος)” (16:2). As I have pointed out earlier, Middle Platonists associated transcendental “standing” with peace and tranquility; it is

<sup>543</sup> For a discussion of the role of the monad in Philonic corpus, see the previous chapter, above.

perhaps because of this association that “standing” comes up at the end of the saying. In *Thomas* 16:4, Jesus develops the argument about the dialectic of war and peace that he initiated in *Thomas* 16:1–2. His point is that stability can be acquired only as the result of a long process. It is only after one dissolves his or her family ties and becomes a *μοναχός* that he or she can “stand.”

(2) The second reason why I think it is likely that *Thomas* is familiar with the idea of transcendental “standing” is due to the peculiar phrasing of saying 50. In a similar way to Clement and his “standing light,” *φῶς ἐστός*, the author of this saying speaks about the light that “took its stand.” There is little doubt that, just like in Clement, the “standing” of the light in saying 50 refers to the light’s immutability:

50:1a πεχε ιϛ δε εϋϋανχοος ηητην δε ητατετηϋωπε εβολ των χοος ναϋ δε ητανει εβολ  
 ηη ποϋοειν 50:1b πμα εντα ποϋοειν ωωπε ημαϋ εβολ ριτοοτϋ οϋαατϋ αϋωρ[ε ερατϋ] αϋω  
 αϋοϋωνρ ε[β]ολ ηη τοϋρικων 50:2 εϋϋαχοος ηητην δε ητωτην πε χοος δε ανον νεϋωρη  
 αϋω ανον ηνωτπ ηπειωτ ετωνρ 50:3 εϋϋανχνε τητην δε οϋ πε πμαειν ηπειτνειωτ ετηη  
 τητην χοος ερωοϋ δε οϋκιν πε μη οϋαναπαϋσις

50:1a Jesus said: “If they say to you: ‘Where did you come from?’, say to them: ‘We came from the light, 50:1b the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established [itself] and became manifest through their image.’ 50:2 If they say to you: ‘Is it you?’, say: ‘We are its children, and we are the elect of the living father.’ 50:3 If they ask you: ‘What is the sign of your father in you?’, say to them: ‘It is movement and repose’” (trans. T. O. Lambdin).

As one of the most puzzling sayings of the whole collection, saying 50 seems to deserve special commentary. According to Antti Marjanen, this saying is an instruction that Jesus “gives his disciples who have to explain their identity.” The purpose of the instruction is extremely ambiguous. Admittedly, “the non-identification of the interrogators with archontic powers, the fact that the interrogators are not portrayed as hostile figures as well as the lack of explicit evidence of a mystical *visio Dei* experience” suggest that the saying can be seen as “simply a catechesis created to give the audience of the Thomasine Jesus answers to fundamental questions which occupied people’s minds everywhere in antiquity.” On the other hand, saying 50 “has its closest parallels in those Gnostic texts which describe the post-mortem ascent of the soul past archontic powers back to the realm of light.”<sup>544</sup>

For the purposes of the present discussion, it is perhaps sufficient to accept that (1) the context presupposed by the instruction is that of either a trial or a test, and (2) the questions asked during the interrogation have right answers and such answers must be known in order to pass the test.<sup>545</sup>

The first puzzle of the saying is the meaning of *τοϋρικων*, “their image” in *Thomas* 50:1b. The possessive article *τοϋ-* is in third person plural and, therefore, refers neither to the interrogators nor to the addressees, since in this case one would expect to find the possessive article either in second- or first-person plural, i.e. either *τετην-* or *την-*. An ingenious solution to this problem has been offered by April DeConick. According to her, there were several stages in the textual history of saying 50.

<sup>544</sup> Marjanen 1996, 34.

<sup>545</sup> Perhaps the identity of the interrogators is not revealed in order to point out that the content of the conversation is more important than its context. In other words, the context is intentionally universal: we are presented with questions that people must face whenever they are on a spiritual journey.

The initial response to the first question (*Thomas* 50:1a) “has been redacted at some point in the history of the transmission of this saying in order to explain the light origin in more detail.”<sup>546</sup> Thus, *Thomas* 50:1b is a later addition to *Thomas* 50:1a; it is no longer a part of the direct discourse, but rather an explanatory note added by an anonymous commentator. In her translation of saying 50, DeConick thus puts quotation marks around *Thomas* 50:1a and places *Thomas* 50:1b in parentheses.

The weakness of DeConick’s hypothesis is that, unlike academic English, Coptic does not possess quotation marks and parentheses. The Coptic text of saying 50 betrays no indication that would help its ancient reader understand *Thomas* 50:1b as a comment on *Thomas* 50:1a. If *Thomas* 50:1b were to be understood as an explanatory note, it would have to have been introduced as an explanatory relative clause, i.e. by ⲉⲣⲉ ⲡⲁⲉ ⲛⲉ or by another, similar expression.

Grammatically, ⲡⲱϣⲟⲥⲓⲛ in *Thomas* 50:1a and ⲛⲓⲙⲁ in *Thomas* 50:1b stand in apposition. The only natural way to understand *Thomas* 50:1 is to see *Thomas* 50:1b as a continuation of the direct discourse amplifying the “light” of *Thomas* 50:1a. Thus, *Thomas* 50:1b should be seen as part of the answer to the first question of the interrogators. It seems unproductive, however, to speculate about the redactional activity behind saying 50, since the alleged addition of *Thomas* 50:1b does not help to uncover the referent of ⲧⲱϣⲉⲓⲕⲱⲛ.<sup>547</sup>

The most appealing explanation of ⲧⲱϣⲉⲓⲕⲱⲛ has recently been offered by Christian Tornau, according to whom, ⲧⲱϣ- of the Coptic text renders ⲉⲁⲩⲧⲱⲛ of the Greek Vorlage.<sup>548</sup> It is important to keep in mind that, in Greek, (1) the reflexive pronoun can be used in place of the possessive one, and (2) the reflexive pronoun of the third person can be used in place of that of the first or second person. Thus, ⲉⲁⲩⲧⲱⲛ in the Greek Vorlage of saying 50 is used in the same sense as it is used in Heb 10:25, namely as an equivalent of ἡμῶν.

It is possible, therefore, that the translator misunderstood the Greek text of saying 50, or rather, as Plisch puts it, “simply translated it too mechanically.”<sup>549</sup> It is also possible that the Greek Vorlage of the Coptic translation was corrupt and had αὐτῶν instead of ⲉⲁⲩⲧⲱⲛ, or that the Greek text was correct, but the translator misread it.

The “image,” therefore, belongs to the addressees. When they are asked about their origins, they are supposed to say that they come from self-generated immovable light, which produced their image. This image, as I will argue in chapter 11, is identical with the “new” image that replaces the “old” one (*Thomas* 22:6), the image of the father (*Thomas* 83:2), and the images that neither die nor reveal themselves (*Thomas* 84:2).

The second puzzle of saying 50 is the second question asked by the interrogators: ⲛⲧⲱⲧⲛⲓ ⲛⲉ (“Is it you?” in the translation by Thomas O. Lambdin; so also the Berliner Arbeitskreis). Plisch finds the phrasing of this question “strange” and suggests an emendation: ⲛⲧⲱⲧⲛⲓ <ⲛⲓⲙ>, “Who are you?”<sup>550</sup> According to him, those who wish to make sense of the Coptic text as it stands have to

<sup>546</sup> DeConick 1996, 65.

<sup>547</sup> One could perhaps suggest that *Thomas* 50:1b was initially a marginal gloss that was eventually interpolated into the main text by a careless scribe. This does not seem to be a likely option, however, since no other traces of mechanical interpolation are attested in *Thomas*. For a detailed discussion of the phenomenon of mechanical interpolation, see Wildberg 2013, 144–50.

<sup>548</sup> See Tornau 2008, 358–9.

<sup>549</sup> Plisch 2008, 131; see also the discussion of *Thomas* 61:2 as a literal rendering of a Greek idiom and *Thomas* 7:2 as an erroneous translation of the double nominative in chapters 9 and 10.

<sup>550</sup> This emendation was proposed already in the *editio princeps*—see Guillaumont et al. 1959, 28–9. This is also suggested by the Berliner Arbeitskreis—see Aland 1997, 532.

“understand the question as a direct reaction” on the part of the interrogators to the first answer, i.e. “Is it (really) you?”<sup>551</sup>

I am inclined to think, however, that there is hardly anything “strange” about the phrasing of the second question. The sentence  $\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\tau\bar{\eta}\ \bar{\eta}\epsilon$  in fact belongs to pattern 10 of Bentley Layton’s classification of nominal sentence patterns.<sup>552</sup> The subject of the sentence is  $\bar{\eta}\tau\omega\tau\bar{\eta}$ , and the invariable pronoun  $\bar{\eta}\epsilon$ , the predicate;  $\bar{\eta}\epsilon$  is anaphoric (or retrospective), i.e. it “refers back to some item outside of the present sentence which was already mentioned in the text.”<sup>553</sup> Thus,  $\bar{\eta}\epsilon$  represents an outside item, i.e. the antecedent, and predicates it to the subject of the sentence. I suggest that the antecedent of  $\bar{\eta}\epsilon$  is  $\pi\alpha\rho\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ . The question that the interrogators ask is, therefore, “Are you it?” In other words, in *Thomas* 50:2, the interrogators inquire whether the addressees are the light that was mentioned in *Thomas* 50:1.<sup>554</sup>

The proposed interpretation of the second question fits nicely with the rest of the saying and has certain implications for the understanding of the second answer. When the addressees say  $\lambda\omicron\omicron\bar{\eta}\bar{\eta}\ \bar{\eta}\epsilon\kappa\omega\eta\rho\epsilon$ , they mean, “We are its children,” i.e. “We are the children of the light,” not “We are his children” (*pace* the Berliner Arbeitskreis).

In the next sentence, the addressees add, “And we are the elect of the living father.” As I have argued in the previous chapter,  $\bar{\eta}\mu\omicron\bar{\eta}\lambda\omicron\varsigma\ \lambda\gamma\omega\ \epsilon\tau\epsilon\sigma\tau\tau\iota$ , “the unique and elect,” in *Thomas* 49:1 is clearly a hendiadys. In a similar fashion, “the children of the light” and “the elect of the living father” in *Thomas* 50:2 can hardly be anything other than a hendiadys. Thus, *Thomas* 50:2 identifies the father with the light.

This brings us to the last detail of *Thomas* 50:2 that is of particular interest for the present discussion—the notion of election. The addressees of saying 50 recognize themselves as the elect of the immovable light. Saying 50, therefore, establishes a connection between transcendental “standing” and election. This very connection is also established in saying 23 (quoted above), where Jesus says that the chosen ones “will stand as a single one.” Thus, just like Philo and Clement, *Thomas* reserves transcendental “standing” to the most commendable individuals: in Philo, it is the sages who “stand”; in Clement, the Gnostics; in *Thomas*, the elect.

Unlike the first two puzzles, the third is not of a linguistic nature, but rather of an exegetical one. The meaning of the expression “movement and repose” have always been a mystery.<sup>555</sup> In what follows, I would like to contribute to the discussion of *Thomas* 50:3. It seems natural to assume that the third answer of the addressees is an integral part of saying 50 and should not be isolated from its immediate context.<sup>556</sup> Since, as I have tried to argue, *Thomas* 50:1 refers to the concept of transcendental “standing,” it is likely that the competent reader of the saying was supposed to

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<sup>551</sup> Plisch 2008, 130.

<sup>552</sup> See Layton 2011, 220–1 (§282).

<sup>553</sup> Layton 2011, 208 (§267).

<sup>554</sup> Cf. the Finnish translation by Marjanen and Uro: “Oletteko te se valo?” (“Are you that light?”) (Dunderberg and Marjanen 2005, 303).

<sup>555</sup> Cf. Plisch 2008, 130.

<sup>556</sup> *Pace* Davies 1992, 670, who understands “movement and repose” as a reference to the seven days of creation that “begin with the Spirit moving upon the waters” and “conclude with a day of repose.” While this interpretation is certainly very appealing, it does not take into account the fact that saying 50 does not seem to contain any allusions to the biblical creation narrative.

recognize and make sense of its Platonizing language. It seems reasonable, therefore, to approach “movement and repose” of *Thomas* 50:3 from the perspective of Platonist metaphysics.<sup>557</sup>

The third question asked during the interrogation is “What is the sign of your father in you?” In other words, the interrogators inquire, “Is there anything in you that would prove your alleged kinship with your father?” The addressees who claim to have come from the divine light and to be its children are now supposed to say whether they share any divine attributes with it (it should be kept in mind that, according to *Thomas* 50:2, “the light” and “the father” are two different names for the same ultimate reality).<sup>558</sup>

Let me now proceed to the third answer. On the one hand, there is little doubt that it is supposed to be seen as a paradox, i.e. it combines two mutually exclusive elements. On the other hand, “movement” (Coptic κιν renders Greek κίνησις) and “repose” seem to be an unusual pair of opposites, at least at first sight. The antonym of κίνησις is στάσις, not ἀνάπαυσις. There is, however, a way to explain why these two elements are opposed to each other and how their polarity can be transcended.

I would like to start with “repose.” As I have pointed out, stability is an important feature of ultimate reality both in Platonism and *Thomas* 50:1. This stability, often described as “standing” (στάσις), is emphatically associated with tranquility, peace, and quiescence. Numenius even goes as far as to say that ultimate reality is τὸ ἡρεμον, “that which is quiescent.” It is possible, therefore, that the “repose” that *Thomas* 50:3 pairs with “movement” hints at the notion of divine immovability, which is intimately related to tranquility.

It is worth noting that when Philo speaks of pious and impious humans in *Abr.* 27, he contrasts exactly these two terms, κίνησις and ἀνάπαυσις. According to Philo, the opposite (τὸ ὑναντίον) of repose is “unnatural movement,” ἡ παρὰ φύσιν κίνησις,<sup>559</sup> which is “the cause of turmoil and disorder and riots and wars (ταραχῶν καὶ θορύβων στάσεων τε καὶ πολέμων αἰτία).” It is the wicked people (οἱ φαῦλοι) who pursue this movement. Unlike them, those who value nobleness (οἱ καλοκάγαθIAN τετιμηκότες) pursue “a life which is quiescent, silent, steadfast, and peaceful (ἡρεμαῖος δὲ καὶ ἡσυχάζων καὶ σταθερὸς ἔτι δὲ καὶ εἰρηνικὸς βίος).” There can be little doubt that just like this passage contrasts movement and repose, so also it contrasts the four outcomes of movement and the four predicates of noble life:

κίνησις	ἀνάπαυσις
ταραχαί	ἡρεμαῖος, sc. βίος
θόρυβοι	ἡσυχάζων, sc. βίος
στάσεις	σταθερός, sc. βίος
πόλεμοι	εἰρηνικὸς βίος

<sup>557</sup> The Platonist background of *Thomas* 50:3 was first suggested in Patterson 2013, 54–9. Although my conclusions are somewhat different from Patterson’s, it was his research that instigated my interest to the metaphysics behind *Thomas* 50:3.

<sup>558</sup> It is worth noting that in the context of a heavenly ascent narrative πιαεῖν, “the sign,” may have various meanings; cf. the discussion of the term πινημιον, “the sign,” in the Apocalypse of Paul (NHC V 23.22–6) in Kaler 2005, 266–8. Yet the modifier ἐτῆν τηγτῆ and the answer of the addressees both indicate that “the sign” in *Thomas* 50:3 refers to a certain inner quality.

<sup>559</sup> Philo borrows this expression from the Stoics. According to *SVF* 3.476, a passion of the soul (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς πάθος) is an unnatural movement (κίνησις παρὰ φύσιν); cf. *SVF* 3.462.

Thus, according to this passage, Philo associates repose with peacefulness and steadfastness; just like he contrasts repose with movement, so also he contrasts peacefulness with wars and steadfastness with riots (cf. a similar word play in *Post.* 184, quoted in section 8.3.3, above). Repose, therefore, belongs to the same domain as stability, peace, and quiescence. As this passage demonstrates, “movement” and “repose” did constitute a conceivable pair of opposites in the symbolic universe of ancient Platonism.

A much more difficult question is, of course, the meaning of “movement” in *Thomas* 50:3. Indeed, immovability is the distinguishing feature of ultimate reality. Yet surprisingly there is a place where movement marries rest. The most important piece of evidence is the following passage from Numenius’ *De bono*:

Now the modes of life of the first god and of the second are these: evidently the first god will be at rest (ἐστῶς), while the second on the contrary is in motion (κινούμενος). So then the first is engaged with the intelligible realm, and the second with both the intelligible and sensible. And be not surprised at my saying this, for you are going to hear something far more surprising. For instead of that motion (κίνησις) which belongs to the second I assert that the rest (στάσις) which belongs to the first is an innate motion (κίνησις σύμφυτος), from which both the order of the world (ἡ τάξις τοῦ κόσμου), and its eternal continuance (ἡ μονὴ ἢ αἰδιος), and its preservation (ἡ σωτηρία) is diffused throughout the universe (τὰ ὅλα) (fr. 15 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.18.20–1; trans. E. H. Gifford, altered).

According to Numenius, there is a paradox that lies at the core of ultimate reality: the first god’s rest (στάσις) is his innate movement (κίνησις σύμφυτος) and is the cause of the order, continuance, and preservation of the world. Previous scholarship has noted that the notion of God’s κίνησις σύμφυτος could have been inspired by *Soph.* 248e (quoted in section 8.3.1, above), where Plato attributes movement, κίνησις, to “that which wholly is,” τὸ παντελῶς ὄν.<sup>560</sup> Regardless of whether or not he had this particular Platonic passage in mind, it is clear that Numenius adhered to the idea that ultimate reality has a dynamic aspect. As Dillon puts it, Numenius’ first god “produces the stability and order of everything else” and, therefore, “must have motion in some sense.”<sup>561</sup>

Thus, the “standing” god of Numenius is not entirely deprived of movement. It is worth noting that a somewhat similar train of thought occurs in Philo’s exegesis of Exod 17:6. While the initial text of Exod 17:6 LXX read ὁδὲ ἐγὼ (rendering Hebrew וָאֲנִי), Philo attests an alternative reading (ὁδὲ ἐγὼ), which allows him to interpret Exod 17:6 as a reference of God’s omnipresence:

“Here I stand there before you were” (ὁδὲ ἐγὼ ἔστηκα ἐκεῖ πρὸ τοῦ σέ) (Exod 17:6). He shows hereby that He subsists (ὑφέστηκε) before all created being, and that He who is here exists also there and elsewhere and everywhere, for He has filled all wholly and entirely and left nothing where His presence is not. For He does not say “I will stand here and there,” but even now, when I am present here, I stand at the same time there also. My motion is not one of transference in space, where the traveler leaves one place when he occupies another, but it is a motion of

<sup>560</sup> See, e.g., Krämer 1964, 70; des Places 1973, 110.

<sup>561</sup> Dillon 1996, 369.

self-extension and self-expansion (τονικὴ κίνησις) (*Sacr.* 67–8; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, altered).

In this passage, Philo uses the concept of “tonic movement” (a Stoic expression, cf. *SVF* 2.448; 2.450–1; 2.864; Marcus Aurelius, *Medit.* 6.38) in order to explain how his “standing” God can be omnipresent. This movement is unique, since it has nothing to do with changing from one location to another. It is a type of movement that is compatible with immovability.

Thus, both Numenius and Philo claim that the “standing” God moves and rests at the same time. In order to describe this paradox, they introduce new varieties of movement: κίνησις σύμφυτος, in the case of Numenius, and τονικὴ κίνησις, in the case of Philo. I believe that these two examples of divine “motionless motion” are important for understanding *Thomas* 50:3.

Although movement is not explicitly attributed to the light, *Thomas* 50:1 reports that it was involved in a certain creative activity. Despite its immovability, the light is not entirely passive: it generated itself before it “stood,” and, after it “stood,” it produced the image. Thus, it is possible to surmise that “movement and repose” refer to the dialectic nature of ultimate reality: its stability goes hand in hand with its creativity.

It is also conceivable why the addressees are supposed to say that they somehow share these two divine attributes. As I have tried to argue, *Thomas* 16:4 and 23:2 envision human perfection as stability. But this stability is not lifeless and static. Just like the self-generated light revealed itself in the image, so is it also the nature of the children of light to radiate light. According to *Thomas* 24:3, the light that does not shine is darkness:

A οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς φανερὸν ἡννοῦντο  
B ἀλλ’ οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐκκοσμος τῆς  
B’ ἐστὶν οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς  
A’ οὐκ ἔστιν

A There is light within a person of light,  
B and it lights up the whole world.  
B’ If it does not shine,  
A’ it is darkness (trans. T. O. Lambdin, altered).

It seems that the structure of *Thomas* 24:3 is chiasmic: if there is light (A), then it shines (B); if it does not shine (B’), then there is no light (A’). This is a simple truth formulated as a paradox: to shine is in light’s nature; if light does not shine, it is darkness.<sup>562</sup>

It is reasonable to suggest that the “people of light” of *Thomas* 24:3 and the “children of light” of *Thomas* 50:2 refer to the same group of commendable individuals. Thus, I conclude that, by their “movement,” the addressees of *Thomas* 50:3 mean their radiance. They claim that their stability does not interfere with their luminous nature. They are at rest, yet they shine. A somewhat similar notion

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<sup>562</sup> Alexey Somov has drawn my attention to a similar paradox in Mark 9:50, where Jesus exhorts his disciples not to become ἄλας ἄναλον, “unsalted salt”; for discussions of this metaphor, see, e.g., Nauck 1952, 173–6; Latham 1982, 227–8; Garlington 2011, 740–2.

It is difficult to ascertain what exactly this movement/radiance means with regard to the addressees of saying 50. While the self-generated light of *Thomas* 50:1 seems to assume a demiurgic role of some sort, the “movement” of the “children of light” probably refers to a different type of activity. The most likely option is religious instruction. The use of light imagery in *Thomas* 33:2–3 supports this interpretation:

33:1 Jesus said, “That which you (sg.) will hear in your (sg.) ear preach into the other ear from your (pl.) housetops. 33:2 For no one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel, nor does he put it in a hidden place, 33:3 but rather he sets it on a lampstand so that everyone who enters and leaves will see its light (trans. T. O. Lambdin, altered).

The last saying that I need to discuss before I conclude this chapter is *Thomas* 18:3. I believe that the notion of the self-generated light from *Thomas* 50:1 is crucial for the understanding of the notion of “standing” in *Thomas* 18:3:

18:1 The disciples said to Jesus: “Tell us how our end will be.” 18:2 Jesus said: “Have you already discovered the beginning that you are now asking about the end? For where the beginning is, there also will be the end. 18:3 Blessed is he who will stand at the beginning. And he will know the end, and he will not taste death.”

While the disciples of saying 18 do not know about the beginning, the addressees of saying 50 are well aware of it. They know that in the beginning the divine light generated itself, “stood,” and

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produced their image. It seems reasonable to surmise, then, that “to stand in the beginning” means to imitate the primordial light that “stood” after it generated itself.

As I have pointed out earlier, there is a notable similarity between Clement’s “standing light,”  $\phi\tilde{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ , and the light that “stood” in *Thomas* 50:1. It is also worth noting that Clement considers becoming  $\phi\tilde{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  to be the final stage of spiritual progress: it is the perfect Gnostic who transforms into  $\phi\tilde{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ . It is possible, therefore, that the beatitude of *Thomas* 18:3 refers to the same transformation into the standing light.

## 8.5. Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the significance of Platonist metaphysics for the understanding of the notion of “standing” in *Thomas*. In section 8.1, I surveyed the interpretations of Thomasine “standing” offered in the publications by DeConick, Williams, and Murray. These interpretations, though quite ingenious, are not appealing, because they do not seem to do justice to the Thomasine context in which the notion of “standing” occurs.

In section 8.2, I have made an attempt to classify various aspects of meaning of “standing” in *Thomas*. First, there are two cases of literal standing: in saying 75, suitors stand at the door of the bridal chamber, and, in saying 99, Jesus’ relatives stand outside. Interestingly, both relatives and suitors stand outside and are contrasted to those who go inside. Furthermore, in both cases, this contrast between going and standing serves as an allegory for excellence and imperfection. Thus, these two instances of literal standing allegorized as imperfection may be seen as a counterbalance to the cases where “standing” is meant metaphorically and refers to divine stability. Second, there is one saying, saying 28, where “standing” refers to presenting oneself, which is evident both from the saying’s structure and from the parallels from other early Christian texts. Finally, sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 refer to the notion of transcendental “standing.”

The notion of transcendental “standing” is one of the many instances where *Thomas* is indebted to the Platonist tradition. Thus in section 8.3, I offer a short survey of various perspectives on the notion of transcendental “standing” in Plato, Alcinous, Philo, Numenius, and Clement.

Section 8.4 deals with the metaphysics of sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50. There are two reasons why it is likely that these sayings refer to transcendental “standing.” First, sayings 16 and 18 associate “standing” with oneness. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, *Thomas* borrows the notion of oneness as perfection from the Platonist tradition. Since both oneness and “standing” are divine attributes, it seems natural to assume that Thomasine “standing” also comes from Platonism. In fact, Philo associates oneness with “standing” in *Gig.* 52 and thus provides us with an important parallel to sayings 16 and 18. Second, the notion of the light that “stood” in saying 50 is remarkably similar to Clement’s notion of “standing light.” It seems reasonable to suggest that *Thomas*, Philo, and Clement speak the same language and that, when it comes to the foundations of metaphysics, all of them have similar views.

Just like Philo and Clement, *Thomas* applies the concept of transcendental “standing” to both ultimate reality and human individuals. Its metaphysics of “standing” can be summarized as follows. Ultimate reality is self-generated immovable light. Paradoxically, this “standing” light is not deprived of movement, as it revealed its creative nature by producing the image. Similarly, the worthy individuals who will assimilate to immovable light and “stand” will not be entirely passive either. Since they are luminous beings, it is in their nature to shine, i.e. to proclaim the truth to others. The

truth that these less spiritually advanced individuals are yet about to learn pertains to what happened in the beginning, i.e. how the light came to be, “stood,” and produced the image; for such an individual, spiritual progress means to imitate this process and thus to become a “standing” light.

Finally, it is worth noting that the metaphysics of “standing” present in sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 has remarkable similarities with other Platonist and Platonizing texts discussed in this chapter. First, according to Philo, only the most advanced human beings, the friends of God, the sages, can regain the divine stability and immutability that humanity tragically lost. According to Clement, it is the sole prerogative of the Gnostic to transform into “standing light.” Similarly, according to *Thomas*, only the chosen ones will “stand” (sayings 23 and 50). Second, Philo and Numenius recognized an intimate connection between stability, on the one hand, and peace and quiescence, on the other; *Thomas* also seems to be aware of this connection (sayings 16 and 50).

## 9. *Thomas* and the Platonists on Immutability and Indivisibility

In this chapter, I deal with the Platonist background of *Thomas* 61. *Thomas* 61 is not a saying, but rather a short dialogue between Jesus and a certain woman whose name is Salome. Most scholars believe that the Coptic text of *Thomas* 61 is corrupt; therefore, along with interpreting the dialogue, I will also offer philological analyses of certain Coptic words and expressions present in the text.

Below is the Coptic text of *Thomas* 61 and its English translation. I have modified the English translation of *Thomas* 61 prepared by the Berliner Arbeitskreis für koptisch-gnostische Schriften and revised by Stephen J. Patterson and James M. Robinson.<sup>564</sup>

61:1 πεξε ιϥ ογν̄ σναγ ναμ̄τον̄ μ̄μαγ ρι ογ̄λοϥ πογα ναμογ πογα ναωνε  
61:2 πεξε σαλωνη̄ ν̄τακ̄ νιμ̄ πρωμε ρωϥ εβολ̄ ρ̄ν̄ ογα ακτελο̄ εχ̄ν̄ παβλοϥ αγω ακογωμ̄ εβολ̄  
ρ̄ν̄ τατραπεζα  
61:3 πεξε ιϥ ναϥ ξε ανοκ̄ πε πετωροπ̄ εβολ̄ ρ̄ν̄ πετωρηγ̄ αγ†̄ ναεῑ εβολ̄ ρ̄ν̄ να παειωτ̄  
61:4 ανοκ̄ τεκμαθη̄τηϥ  
61:5 ετβε̄ παεῑ †̄χω̄ μ̄μοϥ ξε ροταν̄ εφωαωπε̄ εφωη<ω>̄ ϥναμογρ̄ ογ̄οειν̄ ροταν̄ δε̄  
εφωαωπε̄ εφπηγ̄ ϥναμογρ̄̄ ν̄κακε̄

61:1 Jesus said: “Two will rest on a dining couch. One will die; the other will live.”  
61:2 Salome said: “Who are you, man? As if you were from someone (important), you have gotten a place on my dining couch and you have eaten at my table.”  
61:3 Jesus said to her: “I am the one who comes from the One who is equal (to himself). I was given some of that which is my Father’s.”  
61:4 “I am your disciple!”  
61:5 “Therefore, I say: If he is <equal> (to himself), he will become full of light. But if he is divided, he will become full of darkness.”

I will start with discussing the setting of the dialogue between Jesus and Salome. Then I will analyze the contents of the dialogue, primarily how the saying is influenced by the Middle Platonist philosophy. In the end, I address the integrity of the dialogue, since it has been questioned by a number of scholars.

### 9.1. The Setting of the Dialogue

In the next two subsections, I discuss the circumstances in which Jesus and Salome engage in their dialogue. In the first subsection, I argue that the setting of *Thomas* 61:1–2 is that of a banquet. In the second subsection, I offer several arguments in support of Harold W. Attridge’s interpretation of *Thomas* 61:2 and a suggestion as to how Salome’s reply might be related to Jesus’ opening remark in *Thomas* 61:1.

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<sup>564</sup> See Patterson 2011b, 14–5.

### 9.1.1. Jesus on a Dining Couch

The Coptic noun *σλος* occurs in *Thomas* 61 twice. Even though the primary meaning of *σλος* is “bed,” in *Thomas* 61, it should be understood as “dining couch.”<sup>565</sup> Most probably, the Coptic noun *σλος* in *Thomas* 61 renders the Greek noun *κλίνη*, since *σλος* is the most frequent equivalent of *κλίνη* in the Sahidic New Testament<sup>566</sup> and perhaps in other translated texts as well.<sup>567</sup> Of course it is theoretically possible that *σλος* here renders *κράβαττος*,<sup>568</sup> but the Lukan parallel (see Excursus V) seems to rule this option out. In turn, the Greek noun *κλίνη* means both “bed” and “dining couch,” but since, in *Thomas* 61:2, we encounter the Greek loan-word *τράπεζα*, there can be no doubt that the latter meaning was implied.

The ancient practice of reclining on a dining couch (*κλίνη*) and eating from a table (*τράπεζα*) is well-known. The following two examples from classical literary sources describe the setting that is essentially similar to the one presupposed in *Thomas* 61:<sup>569</sup>

Then how should I feed these people, Glaucon? I asked.

In the conventional way. If they aren’t to suffer hardship, they should recline on proper couches (*ἐπί τε κλινῶν κατακεῖσθαι*), dine at a table (*ἀπὸ τραπεζῶν δειπνεῖν*), and have the delicacies and desserts that people have nowadays (Plato, *Resp.* 372d–e; trans. G.M.A. Grube and C.D.C. Reeve).

Exactly the same thing holds true also in reference to the kitchen: in any establishment where one and the same man arranges the dining couches (*κλίνην στρώννυσι*), lays the table (*τράπεζαν κοσμεῖ*), bakes the bread, prepares now one sort of dish and now another, he must necessarily have things go as they may (Xenophon, *Cyr.* 8.2.6; trans. W. Miller).

In *Thomas* 61:1, Jesus speaks of two individuals reclining on one couch; the saying thus reflects communal dining customs of the ancient world. I believe that Uwe-Karsten Plisch is accurate when he suggests that the setting of *Thomas* 61 is a banquet, where Salome is host and Jesus, one of the guests.<sup>570</sup> Indeed, this seems to be the most natural way of interpreting the saying. While a couch in a typical Greek *ἀνδρῶν* usually measured 1.80–1.90×0.80–0.90 m and could accommodate either one or two guests, a couch in a Roman triclinium was larger, measuring 2.20–2.40×1.20 m and accommodating three persons.<sup>571</sup> It is this latter piece of furniture that Thomasine *σλος* designates.

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<sup>565</sup> Most translators suggest that *σλος* means “bed” both in *Thomas* 61:1 and *Thomas* 61:2. Thomas O. Lambdin translates *σλος* as “bed” in *Thomas* 61:1 and as “couch” in *Thomas* 61:2.

<sup>566</sup> Draguet 1960, 114.

<sup>567</sup> See Crum 1939, 815a.

<sup>568</sup> See Wilmet 1957–1959, 3:1695–6.

<sup>569</sup> As for the early Jewish and early Christian literature, the same practice seems to be attested in Ezek 23:41 LXX: “you would sit on a covered couch (*ἐπὶ κλίνης ἐστρωμένης*), and a table adorned in front of it (*τράπεζα κεκοσμημένη πρὸ προσώπου αὐτῆς*)” (NETS). In the New Testament, *κλίνη* undoubtedly means “dining couch” in Mark 7:4. These two examples come from BDAG, 549, s.v. *κλίνη*.

<sup>570</sup> Plisch 2008, 151.

<sup>571</sup> See Dunbabin 2003, 38–40.

Since Salome is the host, she says that Jesus reclines on “her” couch and eats from “her” table. It seems unlikely that she and Jesus recline on the same couch:<sup>572</sup> as Matthew B. Roller convincingly argues, a man and woman reclining together in Roman times “thereby announce a licit, proprietary sexual connection.”<sup>573</sup>

To this must be added that a woman present at a banquet is not necessarily either an entertainer or a prostitute. While in Greece, according to Katherine Dunbabin, “reclining at dinner was a male prerogative,” in Roman times, respectable women “participated in banquets reclining together with men.”<sup>574</sup> This phenomenon is attested by both literary and non-literary sources, e.g. a mosaic panel from Capua (first or second century CE) depicts “women who to all appearances are portrayed in their dress and demeanour as respectable members of society, participating in the feast on equal terms with men.”<sup>575</sup>

### 9.1.2. Jesus Has Come from Someone Special

Salome says that Jesus got a place (literally, “came up” or “climbed”) on her dining couch and ate from her table  $\rho\omega\varsigma \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \chi\tilde{\eta} \omicron\gamma\alpha$ , i.e. “as from one.” The majority of scholars believe that the text “is near to nonsense”<sup>576</sup> and therefore has to be emended.

If we cannot convincingly interpret the text as it stands, an emendation would certainly be in order. If this were the case, the best option would probably be to accept H. J. Polotsky’s proposal that \* $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \xi\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$  of the Greek *Vorlage* was mistranslated as \* $\acute{\omega}\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\xi \acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ .<sup>577</sup> Indeed, the improved text fits nicely into the setting of the dialogue, as it was described above. While Salome is the host of this banquet, Jesus is lying on her dining couch and eating the food from her table as her *guest*.<sup>578</sup>

As insightful as Polotsky’s proposal is, it is every scholar’s duty to try to interpret the text as it stands, and propose emendations only after proving that the text as it stands is meaningless.<sup>579</sup> Hence, I would like to discuss the proposals of Harold W. Attridge and Ismo Dunderberg, who both believe that the phrase in question “can be understood as it stands.”<sup>580</sup>

In his 1977 translation of *Thomas*, Lambdin rendered  $\rho\omega\varsigma \epsilon\beta\omicron\lambda \chi\tilde{\eta} \omicron\gamma\alpha$  “as though from the One.” According to Attridge, this translation is inaccurate:<sup>581</sup> “If  $\omicron\gamma\alpha$  is indeed a translation of a Greek  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , used in this metaphysical sense, we would certainly not expect it to be anarthrous in either language.”<sup>582</sup> According to Attridge,  $\omicron\gamma\alpha$  renders  $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ , which in this context means “someone special.”<sup>583</sup>

<sup>572</sup> Pace Alikin 2010, 22–3.

<sup>573</sup> Roller 2006, 121.

<sup>574</sup> Dunbabin 2003, 22–3.

<sup>575</sup> Dunbabin 2003, 68.

<sup>576</sup> Plisch 2008, 150.

<sup>577</sup> See Layton 1989, 1:74.

<sup>578</sup> See LSJ, 1189, s.v.  $\xi\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (I.2).

<sup>579</sup> Another alternative is to suggest that the Coptic translator understood the interrogative pronoun  $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  as the indefinite pronoun  $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ . See Petersen 1999, 198–9. As I point out below, the Coptic text makes good sense as it stands; therefore, there is no reason to think that the translator misunderstood the Greek expression.

<sup>580</sup> Dunderberg 2006, 90.

<sup>581</sup> It seems that Lambdin found Attridge’s argumentation convincing, since “the One” is not mentioned in subsequent editions of his translation.

<sup>582</sup> Attridge 1981, 31.

<sup>583</sup> See Attridge 1981, 31–2; cf. LSJ, s.v.  $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  (A, II, 5); BDAG, s.v.  $\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma$  (2).

Attridge does not mention any other texts where the indefinite pronoun οἷα renders τις with this special meaning. There is, however, at least one example that supports his hypothesis. In the Lycopolitan (dialect *L6*) text of the Acts of Paul, published by Carl Schmidt from P.Heid. Inv. Kopt. 300+301,<sup>584</sup> τινές (here, “some important people”) is rendered as ḡaḡine (ḡoḡine in Sahidic), the plural form of οἷα:

And Paul, seeing Onesiphorus, smiled; and Onesiphorus said, “Hail, O servant of the blessed God.” And he said, “Grace be with you and your house.” And Demas and Hermogenes were jealous and showed greater hypocrisy, so that Demas said, “Are we not of the blessed God that you have not thus saluted us?” And Onesiphorus said, “I do not see in you the fruit of righteousness, but if you are some important people (εἰ δὲ ἔστε τινές = [εἰ ὡπνε Δε ἦτ] ὡπνη ḡaḡin[ε]), come also into my house and refresh yourselves” (Acts Paul 3:4; trans. J.K. Elliott, altered).

Attridge’s hypothesis seems to be the most convincing explanation of Salome’s words. Dunderberg, however, disagrees with Attridge. According to him,<sup>585</sup> ἥως ἐβολ ḡñ οἷα might render either \*ὥς ἐξ ἐνός or \*ὥς ἀφ’ ἐνός.<sup>586</sup> Dunderberg argues that there are two possible interpretations for Salome’s words. First, since, in *Exc.* 36.1, εἶς occurs without the article and since “it is doubtless used in the metaphysical sense meaning God,” the same might also be true of *Thomas* 61. Second, Salome might have the equality of all people in mind, as the author of Hebrews does in Heb 2:11.<sup>587</sup> Both these suggestions are very insightful, but I do not find them compelling.

Both expressions that, according to Dunderberg, might have been present in the Greek *Vorlage* (i.e. either \*ὥς ἐξ ἐνός or \*ὥς ἀφ’ ἐνός) are present in Alexander of Aphrodisias’ commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysica*. (1) In his comment on *Metaph.* 988b22–24, Alexander says that there are those who (erroneously) think that the universe (τὸ πᾶν) is one, because it has only one (material) cause. If this is the case, says Alexander, ἐν ὥς ἐξ ἐνός i.e. “(the universe is) one as (coming) from one (thing).” (2) In his comment on *Metaph.* 1003b16, Alexander says that there is one science (ἐπιστήμη μία) that deals with the things that are said in various ways ὥς ἀφ’ ἐνός τε καὶ πρὸς ἓν, i.e. “by derivation from one thing and with reference to one thing” (trans. A. Madigan). These two examples show that it is not true that the expression as it stands “is near to nonsense,” since it is quite meaningful in Alexander’s commentary. Moreover, it is evident that the expression might have been used in a metaphysical sense. Having said that, I would like to point out that in different metaphysical contexts ἐνός has different metaphysical meanings, but the one that Attridge rejects (ἥως ἐβολ ḡñ οἷα = “as though from *the* One”) is indeed impossible in *Thomas* 61:2. The two examples from Alexander’s commentary illustrate Attridge’s point:

- (1) Since it originates from a single source (and not from two, three, etc., sources), the universe is one (= there is no second universe);

<sup>584</sup> See Schmidt 1905, 4\*–19\*.

<sup>585</sup> Dunderberg 2006, 95.

<sup>586</sup> Both retroversions are possible. In the Sahidic New Testament, ἐβολ ḡñ οἷα renders ἀφ’ ἐνός in Heb 11:12 and ἐξ ἐνός in Acts 17:26, Rom 5:16 (var. ἐβολ ḡñ οἷα), and Heb 2:11.

<sup>587</sup> There is also a third interpretation proposed by Dunderberg, viz. Salome speaks about the equality of friends sharing a meal, but, grammatically speaking, this is not a significantly different option.

(2) One science deals with multiple objects as long as these objects come from one thing (and not from two different things).

The second example is, in fact, very similar to the two parallels Dunderberg draws in his book:

ἐν ἐνότητι μέντοι γε προεβλήθησαν οἱ ἄγγελοι ἡμῶν, φασίν, <εἷς ὄντες><sup>588</sup>, ὡς ἀπὸ ἐνὸς προελθόντες.

They say that it is in unity that our angels were put forth, for they <are one>, having come forth from one.

ὁ τε γὰρ ἀγιαζὼν καὶ οἱ ἀγιαζόμενοι ἐξ ἐνὸς πάντες.

For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one (God) (NRSV, slightly altered).

The point in Heb 2:11, *Exc.* 36.1, and in Alexander's comment on *Metaph.* 1003b16 is the same: there are multiple objects that have something in common, because they originated from one and the same thing. Even though all these passages, including Heb 2:11, are metaphysical in a sense, none of them refers to the metaphysical concept of "the One."

As for the second interpretation proposed by Dunderberg, i.e. "as (coming) from one (Father) you have gotten a place on my dining couch and you have eaten from my table," it does not seem to be supported by the context for a couple reasons. First, the Father is not mentioned in the dialogue yet; therefore, it would not be clear to whom Salome is referring. Second, Salome is not saying that *both* Jesus *and* she are "from one." Remarkably, *Thomas* 61:2—unlike Heb 2:11, *Exc.* 36.1, and Alexander's comment on *Metaph.* 1003b16—does not mention multiple objects that are "from one." Only Jesus is said to be "from one." Hence, it is very unlikely that Salome speaks about her or someone else's equality with Jesus.

Since Dunderberg's proposal is open to criticism, I accept Attridge's hypothesis as the most likely explanation of ϣωϥ εβωλ ϣἡ ογα and render this expression with "as if you were from someone (important)." A similar expression is employed in Ign. *Eph.* 3:1, "I do not give you orders as if I were someone (important) (ὡς ὧν τις)."<sup>589</sup>

The last question I address in this section is how the initial words of Jesus and Salome's reply are related to each other. The brevity of the saying does not seem to allow us to give a decisive answer to this question. Nevertheless, I would like to present what I believe to be the most plausible option.

As Plisch has pointed out, Jesus' opening remark and Salome's reply are linked by the catchword σλωϥ; therefore, "Salome obviously understood the saying in the first sentence as referring to a situation at a banquet."<sup>590</sup> Thus, Salome's answer means that she sees Jesus' words as a threat. It is tempting to assume that, when Jesus spoke of "the one who will die," Salome deduced that he spoke

<sup>588</sup> The manuscript reads εἰσιόντες, "going in." The emendation <εἷς ὄντες> was proposed in Schwartz 1908, 131.

<sup>589</sup> Unfortunately, there is no Coptic translation of this verse; only the very beginning of the Sahidic version of Ign. *Eph.* has survived; see Lefort 1952, 52.

<sup>590</sup> Plisch 2008, 151. The following interpretation differs from the one offered by Plisch, since he relies upon the text altered according to Polotsky's emendation. According to Plisch, Salome's reply is a reprimand: she finds Jesus' words inappropriate, as killing the guests' mood and thus reminds him that he is but a guest (\*ξένος) in her house.

about her. In this case, his words are a wake-up call of sorts: even though we are dining together now, something bad may happen to you in the near future if you do not seek salvation. This option is, however, very unlikely. First, as I have noted in section 9.1.1, nothing indicates that Jesus and Salome are lovers; therefore, they probably recline on separate couches. Second, if the author of the saying wanted to say that Jesus would live and Salome would die, he would not have used two masculine pronouns (i.e. *ποινα*), but rather one masculine and one feminine (i.e. *τογει*).

It is, therefore, reasonable to surmise that Salome thinks that Jesus is speaking about the guests of the banquet she is hosting. She understands his words as a grim prophesy of sorts and is terrified by them. She wants to know who gave him the authority to talk like this. Perhaps she even interprets his words as a direct threat to everyone present at the banquet. It is possible that she suspects him to be a representative of the Roman authorities and who came to her banquet as a participant in a punitive expedition. All in all, her question indicates that she is in the dark about Jesus' divine nature; her reply invites Jesus to reveal who he truly is.

## 9.2. The Contents of the Dialogue

In what follows, I argue that we might gain better insight into the words of Jesus in *Thomas* 61:3 and *Thomas* 61:5, if we appreciate their indebtedness to the Platonist metaphysics of divine immutability and indivisibility.

### 9.2.1. Divine Immutability

In *Thomas* 61:3, Jesus says that he “exists from *πετωνω*.” As Antti Marjanen observes, the meaning of *πετωνω* is problematic. For the same reason, a number of recent translations interpret *ωνω* “in light of its present context and in light of Thomasine theology,” (e.g. “to be integrated,” “to be undivided,” “to be whole”) even though “no parallel for this kind of use of *ωνω* has been found.”<sup>591</sup>

Two details should be pointed out with regard to the Greek *Vorlage* of this expression. First, different forms of *ωνω* almost always render *ἵσος* and *ἴσος* + a verb in the Sahidic New Testament.<sup>592</sup> Second, according to W.E. Crum, the Greek adjective *ἵσος* and its derivatives are quite often rendered *ωνω*, the stative form of *ωνω*<sup>593</sup>—see, for instance, the Sahidic translations of Athanasius of Alexandria, *Vit. Ant.* 14.4,<sup>594</sup> Exod 26:24, Ezek 40:5, Mark 14:56, *Can. ap.* 7 (= *Const. ap.* 8.47.22–4 Metzger),<sup>595</sup> Zech 4:7, Sir 9:10, Pseudo-John Chrysostom, *Ios. cast.* PG 56.587.26.<sup>596</sup> The *Concordance du Nouveau Testament sahidique* adds Rev 21:16 to the list.<sup>597</sup> Since the examples are quite numerous,<sup>598</sup> I believe it is quite reasonable to conclude that the Coptic translator had *ἵσος* or a

<sup>591</sup> See Marjanen 1998c, 91.

<sup>592</sup> See Draguet 1960, 105.

<sup>593</sup> See Crum 1939, 606.

<sup>594</sup> Garitte 1949, 20.

<sup>595</sup> Lagarde 1883, 211.

<sup>596</sup> Rossi 1889, 21.

<sup>597</sup> See Wilmet 1957–1959, 3:1310.

<sup>598</sup> This list can easily be expanded. For instance, while one of the Coptic versions of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ reads *εἶπον* (NHC III 95.8), the parallel passage in another version reads *ωνω* (BG 87.2).



cognate form of ἴσος in his *Vorlage*.<sup>599</sup> Therefore, in *Thomas* 61:3, Jesus says that he comes either from “the one who is equal” or from “the thing that is equal.”

I do not find the second option compelling. Of course, πετρωηϛ might be a rendering of a Greek neuter noun, i.e. τὸ ἴσον. This expression does come up in philosophical literature, e.g. Plato discusses αὐτὸ τὸ ἴσον, i.e. “the equal itself” in *Phaed.* 74a–75c (cf. 78d), and Alexander of Aphrodisias says that there are various species (τὰ εἶδη) of τὸ ἕν: τὸ ταυτόν, τὸ ὅμοιον, τὸ ἴσον and many others (see his comment on *Metaph.* 1004a22–23). Still, the context hardly allows us to assume that Jesus speaks about an abstract entity different from the Father. Perhaps one could argue that “what is equal” refers to the divine realm as a whole; if this is the case, the point of the next sentence is that Jesus is not only from the divine realm, but also has an intimate connection with the Father himself. Still, this interpretation implies that *Thomas* 61:3 presupposes a complex system of divine beings, which does not seem to find any support in the other Thomasine sayings. Therefore, I prefer the simplest solution: since Jesus talks about the Father in the second sentence of *Thomas* 61:3, πετρωηϛ in the first sentence of *Thomas* 61:3 most certainly refers to the Father as well.

The problem is, as Dunderberg points out, that, in *Thomas* 61:3, “being equal” “is maintained without defining the point of comparison (to *whom* is one equal?).”<sup>600</sup> My suggestion is that, in this instance, *Thomas* 61 is indebted to the Platonist tradition, and that the philosophical texts contemporary with *Thomas* 61 might shed light on this text.

In what follows, I show that a number of Middle Platonist sources state that ultimate reality is (among other things) always equal to itself. I would like to start with two remarkable passages in Philo.<sup>601</sup> First, according to *Aet.* 43, God is equal to himself:

For God is equal to Himself and like Himself (ἴσος γὰρ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ καὶ ὅμοιος ὁ θεός); His power admits neither relaxation to make it worse, nor tension to make it better (trans. F.H. Colson).

It is worth noting that Valentin Rose attributed *Aet.* 39–43 to Aristotle; he listed this passage as a fragment of the lost Aristotelian work *De philosophia* (fr. 21 Rose = fr. 19c Ross).<sup>602</sup> Yet, as Bernd Effe points out, in *Aet.* 43–44, we encounter Philo’s own thoughts.<sup>603</sup> As for the statement that God is “equal to Himself and like Himself,” it is quite possible that Philo borrowed the expression from *De universi natura*, a second-century BCE pseudepigraphon ascribed to ancient Pythagorean Ocellus from Lucania. According to *Univ. nat.* 5, the universe (τὸ ὅλον καὶ τὸ πᾶν) “always remains the same, equal to itself and like itself (ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὸ καὶ ὡσαύτως διατελεῖ καὶ ἴσον καὶ ὅμοιον αὐτὸ ἑαυτῷ).”<sup>604</sup> In *Aet.* 12, Philo says that he read (ἐνέτυχον) *De universi natura*, and there is thus no reason to doubt

<sup>599</sup> I do not agree with Jesse Sell that the *Vorlage* had “some form of ἴσος εἶναι” (Sell 1980, 30). It might as well have any other word that contains the same root.

<sup>600</sup> Dunderberg 2006, 97.

<sup>601</sup> The references to Philo’s works are from Gustav Stählin, “ἴσος, ἰσότης, ἰσότημις,” *TDNT* 3:351 (Stählin’s reference “Sacr. AC, 10” is to be corrected to “Sacr. AC, 9”).

<sup>602</sup> See Rose 1886, 36–7. For the arguments in favor of this attribution, see Effe 1970, 16–17.

<sup>603</sup> See Effe 1970, 20.

<sup>604</sup> Cf. Cyril of Alexandria’s quotation from a Hermetic writing, below, where Aristotelian attributes of the universe are applied to a deity.

his testimony.<sup>605</sup> In turn, the expression ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὸ καὶ ὡσαύτως in *Univ. nat.* 5, clearly comes from Plato's dialogues.<sup>606</sup>

The second Philonic passage that is relevant for this discussion is *Sacr.* 8–9. In this passage, Philo says that Moses “had room for neither addition nor taking away (μήτε πρόσθεσιν μήτε ἀφαίρεσιν κεχωρηγώς),” for God “appointed him as a god (εἰς θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐχειροτόνει).”<sup>607</sup> Not only God is equal to himself; Moses, being a god, was also equal to himself:

A god is not subject to either reduction or addition, being complete and eminently equal to himself (πλήρης καὶ ἰσαίτατος ὢν ἑαυτῷ) (*Sacr.* 9).

The second important philosophical source is Apuleius. In his handbook *Plat. Dogm.* 193, he makes a distinction between intelligible and sensible substances:

Οὐσίας, quas essentias dicimus, duas esse ait, per quas cuncta gignantur mundusque ipse; quarum una cogitatione sola concipitur, altera sensibus subici potest. Sed illa, quae mentis oculis comprehenditur, semper et eodem modo et sui par ac similis inuenitur, ut quae uere sit; at enim altera opinione sensibili et inrationabili aestimanda est, quam nasci et interire ait. Et, sicut superior uere esse memoratur, hanc non esse uere possumus dicere.

He (i.e. Plato) says that there are two οὐσίαι (we call them “substances”). Everything comes into being through them, including the world itself. One of them is grasped only by thought, the other one may be laid before the senses. The one that is comprehended by the eyes of intellect is always found in the same state, equal and similar to itself, since it truly is. The other one should be estimated by sensible and irrational opinion. He says that it comes into existence and ceases to be. And, since it is said that the former truly is, we can say that this one truly is not (Apuleius, *Plat. Dogm.* 193).

It is worth noting that neither Philo nor Apuleius invented the concepts they formulated in the passages quoted above, but rather follow the Platonist speculative tradition and spelled out the ideas that were generally accepted among Platonists. The idea that God is immutable and always the same comes from *Resp.* 380d–381e; it was a *locus communis* in Middle Platonism. For instance, in order to prove that the incarnation of God is impossible, Celsus simply paraphrases Plato's words:

I have nothing new to say, but only ancient doctrines. God is good and beautiful and happy, and exists in the most beautiful state. If then He comes down to men, He must undergo change, a change from good to bad, from beautiful to shameful, from happiness to misfortune, and from what is best to what is most wicked. Who would choose a change like this? It is the nature only of a mortal being to undergo change and remoulding, whereas it is the nature of an immortal being to remain the same without alteration (κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχειν). Accordingly, God could not be capable of undergoing this change (Origen, *Cels.* 4.14; trans. H. Chadwick).

<sup>605</sup> Pace Harder 1926, 32; cf. Niehoff 2006, 46.

<sup>606</sup> See especially *Phaed.* 78–80; cf. the same expression in Plutarch, Celsus, and Clement in the passages cited below.

<sup>607</sup> Philo's takes as proof thereof Lev 7:1 LXX: δέδωκά σε θεὸν Φαραώ, “I have given you as a god to Pharaoh.”

Apuleius' doctrine of the two substances comes from Plato's dialogues as well (see, e.g., *Phaed.* 79a). It is also present in the works of the Middle Platonist authors (Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 428b; Alcinous, *Didasc.* 4.7).<sup>608</sup> According to Plutarch, there are two natures, "one evident to the senses, subject to change in creation and dissolution, carried now here now there, while the other is essentially conceptual and always remains the same (*ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ ὡσαύτως ἔχουσα*)" (trans. F.C. Babbitt).

When Philo states that God is equal to himself and when Apuleius states the same with regard to the intelligible substance, they hardly say something new, but rather rephrase the widespread concept that ultimate reality is not subject to any changes. The next logical step in this line of reasoning would be to maintain that equality as such is one of many divine attributes. As I will show, this step was made not only in *Thomas* 61, but also in a number of other Platonist and Platonizing texts, both Christian and non-Christian. One of the texts that attribute equality to God is Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*:

It is hidden from them, even though they happen to be near us, that God gave us so many things that have nothing to do with him. He gave us birth, even though he was not born. He gave us food, even though he is self-sufficient. He gave us growth, even though he is in equality. He gave us happy decline of life and happy death, even though he is immortal and ageless (*Strom.* 5.11.68.2).

It is worth noting that, as Otto Stählin points out, this passage is dependent on Philo, *Sacr.* 98; 100.<sup>609</sup>

Philo, *Sacr.* 98; 100

Clement, *Strom.* 5.11.68.2

μυρία γὰρ ἡμῖν ἢ φύσις<sup>610</sup> ἐπιβάλλοντα  
ἀνθρώπων γένει δεδώρηται,  
ὣν ἀμέτοχος ἀπάντων ἐστὶν αὐτή,  
γένεσιν ἀγένητος οὔσα,  
τροφὴν τροφῆς οὐ δεομένη,  
αὔξησιν ἐν ὁμοίᾳ μένουσα ...  
τίς οὖν ἀγνοεῖ ὅτι εὐγηρία καὶ εὐθανασία  
μέγιστα τῶν ἀνθρωπείων ἀγαθῶν ἐστίν, ὧν  
οὐδετέρου κοινωνὸς ἢ φύσις ἀγήρως τε καὶ  
ἀθάνατος οὔσα;

λέληθεν δ' αὐτούς, καὶ πλησίον ἡμῶν τύχωσιν,  
ὡς μυρία ὅσα δεδώρηται ἡμῖν ὁ θεός,  
ὧν αὐτὸς ἀμέτοχος,  
γένεσιν μὲν ἀγένητος ὧν,  
τροφὴν δὲ ἀνευδεῆς ὧν,  
καὶ αὔξησιν ἐν ἰσότητι ὧν,  
εὐγηρίαν τε καὶ εὐθανασίαν ἀθάνατός τε καὶ  
ἀγήρως ὑπάρχων.

<sup>608</sup> The reference to Plutarch is from Moreschini 1966, 41.

<sup>609</sup> See Stählin, Früchtel, and Treu 1985, 371.

<sup>610</sup> It is worth noting that ἡ φύσις in this passage is equivalent to God. Cf. Goodenough 1969, 51.

In his paraphrase, Clement changed ἐν ὁμοίῳ μένειν to ἐν ἰσότητι εἶναι. The expression μένειν or διαμένειν ἐν ὁμοίῳ (“to remain in the same condition”) occurs quite regularly in Philo’s corpus.<sup>611</sup> Although Clement introduced several changes to the Philonic passage,<sup>612</sup> there is no reason to think that he disagreed with Philo’s understanding of divine nature. Philo would most certainly consider these two expressions synonymous—see, for instance, *Spec.* 4.143, where he says that the laws established “at the beginning (ἐξ ἀρχῆς)” should be kept ἐν ἴσῳ καὶ ὁμοίῳ, i.e. “in an equal and similar state.” Therefore, to say that God is immutable is the same as to say that his distinctive feature is equality, that he is “equal.”

An even closer parallel to the words of Jesus in *Thomas* 61 comes from a lost Hermetic writing, a fragment of which is preserved in Cyril of Alexandria’s *C. Jul.* 1.46.28–35:

Καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ἐν λόγῳ πρώτῳ τῶν «Πρὸς τὸν Τὰτ διεξοδικῶν» οὕτω λέγει περὶ Θεοῦ· Ὁ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ Λόγος, ὃ τέκνον, ἀίδιος, αὐτοκίνητος, ἀναυξής, ἀμείωτος, ἀμετάβλητος, ἄφθαρτος, μόνος, αἰεὶ ἑαυτῷ ὁμοίος ἐστίν, ἴσος δὲ καὶ ὁμαλός, εὐσταθής, εὐτακτος, εἷς ὢν μετὰ τὸν προεγνωσμένον Θεόν<sup>613</sup>. σημαίνει δέ, οἶμαι, διὰ γε τουτουὶ τὸν Πατέρα.

And the same person (i.e. thrice-greatest Hermes) says the following about God in the first of the *Detailed Speeches to Tat*: “O child, the word of the creator is eternal and self-moved, it does not increase, it does not diminish, it is immutable, immortal and unique, it is always like itself, equal and even, it is stable and well-ordered, being one after the God who is beyond knowledge.” I believe he means the Father by this term (Cyril of Alexandria, *C. Jul.* 1.46.28–35).

The expression ὁ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ λόγος in the Hermetic fragment is a bit puzzling. This “creator’s word” is probably identical to the “creative word” (ὁ δημιουργὸς λόγος) mentioned in other Cyril’s quotations (see *C. Jul.* 1.46.11–12 and 15). According to Cyril’s source, the creative word is ungenerated (ἀγέννητος) and infinite; being the first power of “the lord of all” (ὁ πάντων δεσπότης), it emerges from him and rules over everything he has created (*C. Jul.* 1.46.15–18). The “creator’s word” is, therefore, a divine being (or perhaps a divine hypostasis) and not the visible world,<sup>614</sup> even though,

<sup>611</sup> *Opif.* 97; *Cher.* 37; *Gig.* 25; *Deus* 28; *Agr.* 167; *Plant.* 91; *Mut.* 87; *Somn.* 1.154; 1.192; *Jos.* 134; *Mos.* 1.30; 1.118; 2.26; 2.264; *Spec.* 1.47; *Virt.* 21; 151; 193; *Aet.* 61; 115; *Legat.* 241; *QG* 4.204.

<sup>612</sup> Most notably, Clement changed ἡ φύσις to ὁ θεός. On this subject, see van den Hoek 1988, 167 and 226.

<sup>613</sup> Iamblichus (*Myst.* 10.7) and Lactantius (*Inst.* 4.7.3) were aware of a similar Hermetic name for the supreme deity: ὁ προεγνωσμένος θεός, “the God who transcends intellection” (for this translation see Clarke, Dillon, and Hershbell 2003, 353). This expression is also attested in *De sancta ecclesia* ascribed to Anthimus of Nicomedia (this text was probably written by Marcellus of Ancyra; for a survey of scholarly arguments for and against this attribution see Logan 2000, 82–7). According to *Sanct. eccl.* 15, Hermes gave this name to the second god. This contradicts the reports of Iamblichus and Lactantius; thus, Nock, in his edition of this passage from Pseudo-Anthimus, assumed that there was a lacuna (see Nock and Festugière 1945–1954, 4:143). It is not necessary, however, to think that the text is corrupt. As A. J. Festugière points out, when the expression ὁ προεγνωσμένος θεός is applied to the second god, it probably means that the second god is simply envisaged by the first god before everything else (Nock and Festugière 1945–1954, 112 and 144).

<sup>614</sup> Cf. the divine triad of Poimandres: Mind the God (ὁ νοῦς ὁ θεός), the creative mind (ὁ δημιουργὸς νοῦς), and the word of God (ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος) (*Corp. Herm.* 1.9–11). See also Kroll 1928, 56–7.

as A. D. Nock points out, many of the creator's word's attributes seem to come from Aristotle's *De caelo*.<sup>615</sup>

The fragment nicely illustrates the intellectual context in which the point Jesus makes in *Thomas* 61:3 becomes understandable. When Salome shows her ignorance of Jesus' true identity, he says that he comes from the one who is equal. He could also say that he comes from "the one who is alike" or "the one who is even," because all these characteristics describe the same thing, viz. the immutability of the divine realm. In order to make sure that Salome is headed in the right direction, Jesus reformulates the same thought in a more explicit manner, i.e. "I was given some of that which is my Father's."

There is one last parallel that has to be mentioned in this context. According to the Tripartite Tractate (NHC I 67.36–7), the Father<sup>616</sup> did not "reveal his equality (πῶσθ ἴτεσθ)<sup>617</sup> to those who had come forth from him" (trans. H.W. Attridge and E.H. Pagels).<sup>618</sup> In saying that being equal is divine, the Tripartite Tractate is most certainly on the same track as *Thomas* 61, yet I do not think that this gives us a reason to assume that *Thomas* "was read by some Valentinians and that it had an impact on their beliefs."<sup>619</sup> As the sources I cited above seem to show, due to Middle Platonist speculations, the idea that divinity is equal was quite well-known in the first centuries CE. Hence, it is safer to suggest that *Thomas* and the Tripartite Tractate share the same outlook without being dependent on one another.

In *Thomas* 61:5, this discourse on divine equality takes another twist: it is not only God who is equal to himself; human beings could also and indeed should become equal to themselves. As we have already seen, this idea is not unprecedented; according to Philo, not only is God equal to himself, but Moses was also "eminently equal to himself." Moreover, the idea that underlies this expression, viz. that of becoming an immutable being, was well-known. Perhaps, the most illustrative example is *Strom.* 7.10.57.5, where Clement says that the Gnostic who enters the Lord's dwelling-place becomes "light that stands firm, always remains the same, and is absolutely and in every respect immutable," φῶς ἐστὸς καὶ μένον αἰδίως, πάντῃ πάντως ἄτρεπτον.

As I have pointed out in chapter 8, Clement's understanding of human perfection is similar to his description of the deity, especially in *Strom.* 1.24.163.6, where he speaks of "God's stable permanence and his unchanging light, which no form can catch (τὸ ἐστὸς<sup>620</sup> καὶ μόνιμον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὸ ἄτρεπτον αὐτοῦ φῶς καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον)" (trans. J. Ferguson).<sup>621</sup> As Walther Völker points out, comparing these two passages reveals that Clement's idea of perfection gravitates around the notion

<sup>615</sup> See Nock and Festugière 1945–1954, 4:136. Nock refers to *Cael.* 277b27–29, where Aristotle says that the heaven is εἷς, αἰδίος, and ἄφθαρτος. One might also keep in view *Cael.* 288a34–288b1 (ἄφθαρτος and ἀμετάβλητος); see also 270a12–14 (the "primary body," i.e. αἰθήρ, the fifth element, is ἄφθαρτος and ἀναυξής) and 287a23–24 (the motion of the heaven is ὁμαλῆς and αἰδίος).

<sup>616</sup> According to Attridge and Pagels 1985, 273, the subject of NHC I 66.5–67.37 is the Son. It is more likely, however, that, starting from NHC I 66.29, the subject is the Father "en tant qu'il est révélé comme une unité-dans-le-multiplicité dans le Fils" (Painchaud and Thomassen 1989, 311).

<sup>617</sup> According to Painchaud and Thomassen 1989, 312, πῶσθ here probably renders ἰσότης of the Greek *Vorlage*.

<sup>618</sup> The reference is from Dunderberg 2006, 97.

<sup>619</sup> Dunderberg 2006, 99.

<sup>620</sup> For a discussion of the notion of transcendental "standing" in *Strom.* 7.10.57.5 and 1.24.163.6, see chapter 8.

<sup>621</sup> Cf. *Strom.* 6.12.104.3 (God always remains "unchangeably the same in his beneficence," ἐν ταυτότητι τῆς ἀγαθωσύνης), 7.3.13.1 (the Gnostic souls are honored with "an unchanging preeminence," ταυτότης τῆς ὑπεροχῆς), and 7.3.15.4 (God is "unchangeably the same in his just beneficence," ἐν ταυτότητι τῆς δικαίας ἀγαθωσύνης).

of “becoming as like God as possible”; his perfect Gnostic is a reflection of his perfect God.<sup>622</sup> As I have pointed out, the same holds true for Philo, and it also holds true for *Thomas* as well: the description of the Father in *Thomas* 61:3 clearly matches the idea of human perfection expressed in *Thomas* 61:5.

Finally, it is necessary to comment on the ethical dimension of the term ἴσος. Knowing that the Father is “equal,” ancient readers of *Thomas* would probably assume that he is “equal” not only in the metaphysical sense, but also in moral one, i.e. “impartial” and “equable.”<sup>623</sup> The following examples from early Christian authors illustrate these notable nuances in the meaning of the term ἴσος.

Already in classical texts, the adjective ἴσος can mean “impartial” if applied to a human being, e.g. to a judge (see, for instance, Plato, *Leg.* 957c). Clement in his *Protr.* 6.69.3, applies this term to God. It is worth noting that in this passage Clement alludes to *Phaed.* 78–80 (see above); thus, in his view, divine immutability goes hand in hand with divine impartiality:

But the one true God, who is the only just measure, because He is always uniformly and unchangeably impartial (ἴσος ἀεὶ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως ἔχων), measures and weighs all things, encircling and sustaining in equilibrium the nature of the universe by His justice as by a balance (*Protr.* 6.69.3; trans. G.W. Butterworth).

The Gnostic, according to *Strom.* 7.12.69.1, is also ἴσος; since he is free from passions, he treats all people equally, even if some of them are hostile to him:

But the Gnostic, being such as we have described him in body and soul, is found to be fair alike (ἴσος καὶ ὅμοιος) towards all his neighbours, whatever their legal position, whether servant or foeman or whatever it be (trans. J.B. Mayor).

The term is employed in a similar fashion by Athanasius of Alexandria. In his *Vit. Ant.* 14.3–4, Athanasius describes the equability Anthony achieved after about twenty years of exercise. The Coptic text of *Vita Antonii* renders ἴσος εἶναι with the stative form of ἴστω, thus giving us an interesting parallel to *Thomas* 61:<sup>624</sup>

The disposition of his soul was pure again, for it was neither contracted from distress, nor dissipated from pleasure, not constrained by levity of dejection. Indeed, when he saw the crowd, he was not disturbed, nor did he rejoice to be greeted by so many people. Rather, he was wholly balanced, as if he were being navigated by the Word (ὁλος ἦν ἴσος, ὡς ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου κυβερνώμενος = ⲛⲧⲟⲩ ⲧⲏⲣῃ ⲉⲛⲉϣⲟⲩⲏⲁ ϣⲟⲥ ⲉⲣⲉⲡⲗⲟⲩⲟⲥ ⲣΰⲙⲏⲉ ⲙⲙⲟⲩ) and existing in his natural state (trans. D. Brakke).

The context in which the word περῶⲩⲁ is employed in *Thomas* 61:3 seems thus to accentuate the metaphysical dimension of the term, i.e. the divine immutability. It is, however, important to bear

<sup>622</sup> See Völker 1952, 513.

<sup>623</sup> See LSJ, s.v. ἴσος (II.3), and PGL, s.v. ἴσος (b).

<sup>624</sup> See Garitte 1949, 20.

in mind that the same term had an important ethical dimension along with the metaphysical one. This moral dimension of the term may be the reason why, in *Thomas* 61:5, ἐφωη<ω> defines human perfection.

### 9.2.2. Divine Indivisibility

The word πηω in *Thomas* 61:5 is the stative form of the verb παωε; it means “to be divided,” “to be separated.” Two different interpretations of the phrase ἐφωηωπε ἐπηω, “if he is separated,” are possible. It means that someone is either divided, i.e. separated from himself, or separated from someone else, perhaps from God. The latter interpretation was proposed by Hans-Martin Schenke: “If he is <equal> (to God), he will become full of light. But if he is separated (from God), he will become full of darkness.”<sup>625</sup> I do not find this interpretation compelling, since it presupposes that ωηω has different meanings in *Thomas* 61:3 and *Thomas* 61:5, i.e. “equal (to himself)” and “equal (to God).” It is more probable that, in both instances, we are dealing with an idea of being equal in an “absolute” sense, which in turn leads to the conclusion that the term πηω is also used in an “absolute” sense. The idea is that someone is divided, not that someone is separated from God; being “divided” (πηω) is, therefore, the opposite of being “one and the same” (ογα ογωτ).<sup>626</sup>

Since the use of πετωηω in the dialogue of Jesus and Salome shows that *Thomas* 61 most probably took on certain elements of Platonist metaphysics, it is reasonable to surmise that Platonist motifs might be present elsewhere in *Thomas* 61. It seems that, in *Thomas* 61:5, Jesus spells out the anthropological implications of what has been said in *Thomas* 61:3. In what follows, I will show that, just like immutability, indivisibility is a Platonist attribute of ultimate reality; in other words, to be divided means to be outside the divine realm.

Middle Platonists often attributed indivisibility to ultimate reality. The following passage from Numenius is quite illustrative in this regard:

‘Ο θεός ὁ μὲν πρῶτος ἐν ἑαυτοῦ ὧν ἐστὶν ἀπλοῦς, διὰ τὸ ἑαυτῷ συγγιγνόμενος διόλου μὴ ποτε εἶναι διαιρετός.

Being in himself, the first God is simple, because, as the one who keeps company with himself, he is in no way divisible (fr. 11.11–13 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.18.3).

In fact, a view similar to the one of Numenius is expressed already by Aristotle who states in *Phys.* 267b25–26 that the “first mover” is ἀδιαίρετος and ἀμερής. Alcinoüs in his *Didascalicus* offers an explanation why God is indivisible: “God is partless (ἀμερής), by reason of the fact that there is nothing prior to him. For a part, and that out of which a thing is composed, exists prior to that of which it is a part” (10.7; trans. J. Dillon).<sup>627</sup> The Christian Platonists were, of course, also aware of this idea:

<sup>625</sup> Schenke 2012, 881.

<sup>626</sup> For a discussion of the motif of being/becoming one, see chapter 7.

<sup>627</sup> Therefore, as Plutarch puts it, “it is surely fitting that things permanent and divine should hold more closely together and escape, so far as may be, all segmentation and separation (τομὴν ἅπασαν καὶ διάστασιν)” (Plutarch, *Def. orac.* 428c; trans. F.C. Babbitt).

For God does not exist in darkness. He is not in space at all. He is beyond space and time and anything belonging to created beings. Similarly, he is not found in any section. He contains nothing. He is contained by nothing. He is not subject to limit or division (Clement, *Strom.* 2.2.6.1–2; trans. J. Ferguson).

Elsewhere (*Strom.* 5.12.81.5–6), Clement describes God in terms of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides*. Clement calls God “the One” (τὸ ἓν) and, just like Plato (see *Parm.* 137c–d; 142a), describes the One as not being a whole (ὅλον), having no parts (μέρη), infinite (ἄπειρον), without form (ἀσχημάτιστον), and nameless (ἄνωνόμαστον). According to John Whittaker, who discovered the dependence of this passage on *Parmenides*,<sup>628</sup> Clement seems to draw “from a theologically inclined Middle Platonic commentary upon the *Parmenides*, or at least from a Middle Platonic theologico-metaphysical adaptation of the First Hypothesis.”<sup>629</sup> For the purposes of the present discussion, it is worth noting that, according to Clement, the One is not composed of parts (οὐδὲ μὴν μέρη τινὰ αὐτοῦ λεκτέον), because it is indivisible (ἀδιαίρετον γὰρ τὸ ἓν).

All these statements about divine nature have important implications for the overall anthropology. As Francis M. Cornford puts it, “the World-Soul and all individual souls belong to both worlds and partake both of being and of becoming.”<sup>630</sup> On the one hand, as Plato puts it in his *Phaedo*, “the soul is most like the divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble (ἀδιάλυτος), always the same as itself, whereas the body is most like that which is human, mortal, multiform, unintelligible, soluble (διαλυτός) and never consistently the same” (*Phaed.* 80b; trans. G.M.A. Grube). On the other hand, the World-Soul (and, consequently, the individual souls) belongs to both the noetic realm, distinguished by its indivisibility, and to the sensible realm, distinguished by its divisibility (*Tim.* 35a).

According to Plato, the soul is made up of three components: first, a mixture of the being that is “indivisible and always changeless” (ἡ ἀμέριστος καὶ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταῦτὰ ἔχουσα οὐσία) and the being that is “transient and divided in bodies” (ἡ περὶ τὰ σώματα γιγνομένη μεριστή, sc. οὐσία); second, a mixture of the part of the same (ταὐτό) that is indivisible (ἀμερής) and the part of the same that is divided in bodies; third, a mixture of the part of the different (θάτερον) that is indivisible and the part of the different that is divided in bodies.

In my reading of *Tim.* 35a, I follow the proposal made by G.M.A. Grube.<sup>631</sup> It is most certainly the correct understanding of the Greek text. As Cornford points out, this interpretation *Tim.* 35a is attested by several ancient sources, most notably, by Alcinous in his *Didasc.* 14.2.<sup>632</sup> It is worth noting, however, that the majority of ancient commentators tended “to simplify Plato's account of the composition of the soul” by identifying the indivisible being with the same and the divided one with the different.<sup>633</sup>

<sup>628</sup> See Whittaker 1976, 156–7; cf. Whittaker 1983, 305–6.

<sup>629</sup> Whittaker 1976, 158.

<sup>630</sup> Cornford 1956, 63.

<sup>631</sup> See Grube 1932, 80–1.

<sup>632</sup> See Cornford 1956, 64–5.

<sup>633</sup> Runia 1986, 210–1.



Be that as it may, it is evident that, regardless of how the ancient Platonists interpreted *Tim.* 35a, they all agreed that, as a combination of both intelligible and sensible realms, the soul is both divisible and indivisible. As A. E. Taylor put it, “The soul can be neither simply a thing eternal nor merely a creature of time; in its life the eternal and the temporal must somehow be combined in the closest interpenetration.”<sup>634</sup> From this point of view, a human being is divisible in two different aspects: as a union of a body and a soul and as a union of two realms in the soul itself.

I need to make a certain reservation here, since I do not intend to maintain that *Thomas* 61 is engaged in the discussion on the correct exegesis of the *Timaeus*. My suggestion is merely that the author of this saying was aware of certain Middle Platonist ideas; he knew that ultimate reality is indivisible and believed that a human being is capable of becoming “undivided.”

There was at least one philosopher, Philo, who also believed that such a transformation is possible. As I have pointed out in chapter 7, Philo understands human perfection as becoming a monad (μονάς). The most important example is, once again, Moses: as a human being, he was a dyad (δυάς) and consisted of a soul and a body, but afterwards, he was transformed by God into a mind (νοῦς), and thus became a monad (*Mos.* 2.288).

What is important for the interpretation of *Thomas* 61:5 is that the Philonic monad is indivisible (ἀδιαίρετος), while the dyad is divisible (διαίρετός) (*Spec.* 1.180; cf. *Gig.* 52). The monad is unmixed, simple, and suffers neither combination nor separation (*Deus* 82). Moreover, it is important that Moses was transformed into νοῦς, since νοῦς as the rational part of human soul (τὸ λογικόν, sc. ψυχῆς μέρος) is indivisible (ἄτμητος) and undivided (ἄσχιστος) (*Her.* 232; cf. *Agr.* 30).<sup>635</sup> Therefore, when Philo says that Moses became a monad and a mind, he is implying that Moses became undivided. I think that, in *Thomas* 61:5, Jesus suggests that his followers should try to do the same thing as Philo’s Moses did.

It is worth noting that *Thomas* is not the only early Christian text that understands human imperfection as being divided. As I have pointed out in chapter 7, Clement and the Valentinians express the same sentiment. All of them, however, have distinguishing features. Clement understands being divided as the separation of a person from the Son, caused by the person’s unbelief; Valentinians, as the separation of the elect from their angelic bridegrooms; *Thomas*, just like Philo, as the involvement in the corporeal realm.

As I have pointed out earlier, the understanding of equality as human perfection has not only a metaphysical dimension, but also an ethical one. The same seems to hold true in the case of indivisibility. Let us now turn to *Thomas* 72, another Thomasine saying that employs the verb πωρε:

72:1 [πε]ξε οὐρ[ωμ]ε ναϋ ξε χοοc ἡναcνηϋ ωινα εϋναπωρε ἡἡζηναδϋ ἡπαειωτ ἡἡμαει

72:2 πεχαϋ ναϋ ξε ω πρωμε νηη ἡταραατ ἡρεπωρε

72:3 αϋκοτῷ ανεμααθηc πεχαϋ ναϋ ξε ηη εειωοοπ ἡρεπωρε

72:1 A [man said] to him: “Tell my brothers that they have to divide my father’s possessions with me.”<sup>636</sup>

<sup>634</sup> Taylor 1928, 135.

<sup>635</sup> See also Baer 1970, 16–18.

<sup>636</sup> In the translation of the Berliner Arbeitskreis, the word “Father” is capitalized (Aland 1997, 537; Plisch 2008, 173; Patterson 2011b, 17). No explanation of this decision is given, and Plisch’s commentary implies that the text refers not

72:2 He said to him: “Man, who made me a divider?”

72:3 He turned to his disciples (and) said to them: “I am not a divider, am I?”

It is quite clear that the point Jesus makes here is not that he is merely unqualified for the task, i.e. that he is not an arbitrator. The fact that Jesus repeats the same question twice enhances the dramatic effect of the scene, as if Jesus were deeply insulted by the request to divide someone’s property.<sup>637</sup> According to *Thomas* 61:5, everyone who is divided is wretched; the point of *Thomas* 72 is, therefore, that Jesus has nothing to do with division.<sup>638</sup> It is, therefore, evident that the notion of division in *Thomas* 72 has a metaphysical ring; nevertheless, it is quite remarkable, that it is the matter of business that triggers this reaction. We can, at any rate, deduce that the idea of indivisibility as human perfection has important ethical implications. To be indivisible means to refrain from worldly activities. It is likely, therefore, that *Thomas* 72 spells out the practical consequences of the metaphysical idea expressed in *Thomas* 61:5.

### 9.3. The Integrity of the Dialogue

The last question that I would like to address is the integrity of *Thomas* 61. I believe that it is not necessary to assume that “some words have been erroneously omitted,” as Lambdin suggested, in order to make sense of *Thomas* 61:5.<sup>639</sup> I also disagree with Schenke and Plisch who argue that *Thomas* 61:5 “falls entirely outside of the narrative framework”<sup>640</sup> of the saying and that the best solution to the problem is to suggest that the speaker of *Thomas* 61:5 “is neither Jesus nor Salome, but a commentator.”<sup>641</sup> According to Plisch, the word-play in the Coptic text (ⲙⲏⲥⲱⲩ and ⲡⲏⲱ) indicates that the last sentence “could be a Coptic gloss that entered the text rather late.”<sup>642</sup> I disagree for the following reasons.

First, I admit that the fact that there is a pun in the Coptic text may be indicative of the editorial activities of the Coptic scribes, though one might wonder whether it is merely a coincidence that two words in the same sentence have similar endings. Be that as it may, there is no reason to think that the Greek *Vorlage* lacked *Thomas* 61:5, though it is of course unlikely that the Greek text contained a similar pun.

Second, *Thomas* 61:5 makes good sense as the concluding remark uttered by Jesus. The main question is of course to whom Jesus is referring. The most reasonable answer seems to be that, in *Thomas* 61:5, Jesus refers to the two individuals mentioned in *Thomas* 61:1. Jesus therefore returns to the initial topic of the dialogue and explains why one of these two individuals will live, while the other will die. According to *Thomas* 61:5, these two individuals illustrate the two options which every human being has. He who is equal will live, or, in other words, will become full of light; he who is divided will die, or, in other words, will become full of darkness.

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to a divine being, but to an actual parent. In a personal communication (17 August 2016), Plisch wrote to me, clarifying that “Father” was merely a misprint. Thus, I have corrected “Father” to “father.”

<sup>637</sup> Cf. Plisch 2008, 173–4.

<sup>638</sup> Cf. Baarda 1975, 140.

<sup>639</sup> Layton 1989, 1:75.

<sup>640</sup> Schenke 2012, 892.

<sup>641</sup> Plisch 2008, 152.

<sup>642</sup> Plisch 2008, 152.

If my interpretation is accurate, we may conclude that life and death in *Thomas* 61:1 are meant metaphorically. It is possible that, before it became a part of *Thomas* 61, the saying about two individuals lying on a couch was “a straightforward wisdom saying pondering the apparent capriciousness of death.”<sup>643</sup> But, in its present context, *Thomas* 61:1 most certainly refers to spiritual perfection, or lack thereof.

Moreover, as April D. DeConick points out, *Thomas* follows the Jewish tradition, which uses the word “living” as an attribute of the deity; thus, in the incipit of *Thomas*, “Jesus is portrayed as a divine being because he too has the title ‘living.’”<sup>644</sup> Since, as we have seen, *Thomas* 61 urges its readers to imitate God’s equality, it is reasonable to conclude that “to live” in *Thomas* 61:1 means to get one’s own fair share of the divine realm.

I would like to conclude this section with a brief summary of the dialogue between Jesus and Salome as I understand it. The dialogue takes place at a banquet hosted by Salome. Jesus, as one of her guests, reclines on a couch. In his opening remark, Jesus utters a cryptic saying about two individuals lying on one couch (*Thomas* 61:1). The subject matter of this saying is, of course, influenced by the fact that Jesus is himself lying on a couch. As we will later learn from *Thomas* 61:5, the point of his remark is that everyone in the room has to choose from two options: either to assimilate to God and live, or to be sunk in the corporeal realm and die.

Salome’s reply shows that she does not grasp the metaphorical meaning of Jesus’ remark (*Thomas* 61:2). She understands his words literally and thinks that Jesus is threatening her guests. In her reply, she inquires about Jesus’ identity; she wants to know who invested him with the authority to make such statements.

Salome’s question invites Jesus to reveal who he truly is (*Thomas* 61:3). He reveals that he comes from God, who is immutable, always the same, and equal to himself. Jesus is God’s son, and it is God who shared with Jesus his authority, giving him “some of that which is his.”

After Salome realizes whom she is talking to, she declares herself Jesus’ follower (*Thomas* 61:4). This is, however, not what Jesus wants her to do. Once again, Salome, like the rest of his disciples, misses his point (cf. *Thomas* 22:3). Jesus does not reveal his identity in order to make her his disciple. As Antti Marjanen points out, the ultimate goal of spiritual progress is exactly the opposite, i.e. to become masterless, like Thomas did (see *Thomas* 13:5). Jesus exhorts people to become like him (see *Thomas* 108), not to follow him.<sup>645</sup>

In his concluding statement, Jesus returns to the initial topic of the conversation (*Thomas* 61:5). The formula “therefore I say,” *ετϋε παει ιχϋ ϩιϋοϋ ρε*, belongs to Jesus, not to a commentator, as Schenke and Plisch suggested. First, the formula connects *Thomas* 61:5 with *Thomas* 61:3: Jesus comes from God; therefore, he is within his rights to speak of life and death. Second, it explains *Thomas* 61:1 on the grounds of *Thomas* 61:3: God is immutable; therefore, in order to assimilate to God and live, one should become immutable, or else he or she will be enslaved by the corporeal realm and die.

<sup>643</sup> Patterson 1993, 47; cf. Patterson 2011a, 800–1, 810.

<sup>644</sup> DeConick 1996, 123–4.

<sup>645</sup> See Marjanen 1998c, 92.

#### 9.4. Conclusions

I would like to sum up the suggestions that were made above. As I tried to point out, *Thomas* 61:3 and *Thomas* 61:5 make good sense, if we approach them from the Middle Platonist point of view. When Jesus says that he comes from “the one who is equal,” he is referring to the generally accepted Platonist view that God is immutable. As the sources that are either somewhat earlier than or roughly contemporary with *Thomas* 61 indicate, the idea that ultimate reality is immutable might be expressed in different ways, and the attribution of equality to Godhead is just one of many options. To be sure, the “absolute” use of the word “equal” is a bit unusual, but it is not entirely unprecedented. Perhaps this “absolute” use of the word “equal” indicates that, at the time *Thomas* 61 was composed, this word was known as a technical term.

*Thomas* 61:5 seems to be an anthropological corollary to what Jesus says in *Thomas* 61:3. If equality is a divine attribute, then it is essential for everyone who seeks salvation to become equal. As I have pointed out, *Thomas* 61 is not the only ancient text to suggest that a human being is capable of becoming ἴσος, i.e. equal to him- or herself: Philo expresses the same idea, when he says that God made Moses a god and that Moses became equal to himself.

According to *Thomas* 61:5, becoming equal is the opposite of becoming divided. Why are these two conditions set against each other? I suppose that the answer is that dividedness and indivisibility are also philosophically loaded concepts. Both equality and indivisibility are Platonist attributes of ultimate reality; therefore, to be equal means to be divine, while to be divided means to lack divinity.

Platonist sources maintain that ultimate reality is indivisible, while both human body and soul are of composite nature and, therefore, divisible. According to *Thomas* 61:5, in order to reach the perfect state, one should seek to attain indivisibility. Once again, *Thomas* shares this sentiment with Philo, who spoke of the transformation of Moses from the dyad of body and soul into the indivisible monad of pure mind.

Finally, it is significant that the notion of perfection as being equal as well as the notion of imperfection as being divided both have not only a metaphysical, but also an ethical dimension. While an ancient reader could understand *Thomas* 61:5 as a metaphysical statement on human perfection, i.e. as an exhortation to become immutable like Philo’s Moses, he or she could also read it from the ethical perspective, i.e. as advice to become equable like Clement’s Gnostic. Similarly, the same reader could interpret the notion of division in *Thomas* 61:5 from the point of view of metaphysics, viz. as a defect of human nature that Philo’s Moses was able to escape, but that he or she could also understand as a moral flaw condemned by Jesus in *Thomas* 72.

## Excursus V. A Note on Luke 17:34

In chapter 9, I have discussed the context, the meaning, and the Platonist background of *Thomas* 61. It is worth noting that the first verse of this saying, *Thomas* 61:1, has a close parallel in Luke 17:34. This suggests two questions. First, it seems reasonable to ask whether Luke 17:34 should be seen as a source of *Thomas* 61. I believe that this is not the case and that *Thomas* 61:1 is one of the Synoptic-resembling Thomasine sayings that are independent from the Synoptic tradition (cf. my discussion of this issue in chapter 1).

In order to answer the question of whether or not *Thomas* 61:1 and Luke 17:34 are related, I must first discuss the parallels between Luke 17:34 and Matt 24:40. The general discussion of the synoptic problem is beyond the scope of the present study, so I confine myself to a few brief remarks. If we approach the problem from the perspective of the two-source hypothesis, we should probably consider the Lukan version closer to the original. I find the following verdict of Sterling Bjorndahl accurate:

Matthew's edition is probably the result of redaction. He provides better parallelism: the image of two men working in a field provides a better parallel to two women grinding a hand mill since both pairs of characters are engaged in related activities. Luke's version, in which being in bed is paralleled to grinding grain, is less picturesque. It is difficult to imagine why Luke would have destroyed such consistent imagery, had a version like Matthew's been present before him in Q.<sup>646</sup>

Since the version that features the couch seems to be preferable to the one that features the field and since *Thomas* 61:1 lacks any of the redactional features of Luke,<sup>647</sup> the most logical decision would be to consider *Thomas* 61 independent from the synoptic gospels. The saying itself might be quite ancient, given that it is independently attested by *Thomas* and Luke.<sup>648</sup> What the original form of the saying was and whether or not it was uttered by the historical Jesus are, however, questions that go beyond the scope of the present study.

I now proceed to the second question. In chapter 9, I have argued that the noun *σλοσ* in *Thomas* 61:1 renders Greek *κλίνη* and should be translated as "dining couch." Thus, the setting of *Thomas* 61:1 is that of a banquet. This poses the question of whether or not the context of Luke 17:34 is that of a banquet as well. I am inclined to think that this is the case and that Luke 17:34, just like *Thomas* 61:1, speaks about two individuals dining on a couch.

It is clear for a couple reasons that Luke 17:34 speaks about two men, not about a man and a woman. First, both terms in the sentence are masculine: "I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed (*ἐπὶ κλίνης μιᾶς*); one (*ὁ εἷς*) will be taken and the other (*ὁ ἕτερος*) left" (NRSV).<sup>649</sup> Second, verse 17:34 parallels verse 17:35, which features two women. The parallelism of 17:34 and 17:35 indicates that the two individuals in 17:34 must be male (cf. Matt 24:40–41).

<sup>646</sup> Bjorndahl 1994, 88.

<sup>647</sup> See Sieber 1966, 227–30.

<sup>648</sup> It can be argued that Apoc. Zeph. 2:2–4 is yet another instance of the independent attestation of this saying. See Excursus VI, where I express certain doubts about it.

<sup>649</sup> Cf. Zmijewski 1972, 493: "Von daher dürfte es unwahrscheinlich sein, daß unter *ἡ κλίνη* ein (gemeinsames) Bett (zum Schlafen) zu verstehen ist."

A natural question that might come to the mind of a reader of Luke 17:34 is why Jesus would talk about two men lying on one bed. According to François Bovon, Luke was thinking “of those low-income homes where several members of the same family occupied the same bed.”<sup>650</sup> Although this interpretation cannot be completely ruled out, it seems to dampen the saying’s eschatological tone. The saying focuses on the sudden separation of those who appear to be peers, not the misery of the living conditions of certain social classes.

It is, therefore, tempting to conclude that *κλίνη* means “dining couch” in Luke 17:34. Some commentaries, however, claim that the phrase *ταύτη τῇ νυκτί* indicates that the saying is about sleeping on a bed, not dining on a couch.<sup>651</sup> This argument is hardly convincing, however, since dining during the night-time is not unusual for the narration of the Luke-Acts (see Acts 16:33–34; cf. Acts 20:7–11).

Hence, it is very likely that Luke 17:34 refers to a banquet. The setting of the saying may be a communal gathering of an early Christian group. These meetings indeed took place in the evening,<sup>652</sup> at which times Christians either sat or reclined on the couches.<sup>653</sup> Nothing prevents us from reading Luke 17:34 against this background.

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<sup>650</sup> Bovon 2013, 523.

<sup>651</sup> See Marshall 1978, 668; Nolland 1993, 862.

<sup>652</sup> Alikin 2010, 34–5.

<sup>653</sup> Alikin 2010, 57–8.

## Excursus VI. A Note on Apoc. Zeph. 2:2–4

In the previous excursus, I noted that *Thomas* 61:1 and Luke 17:34 appear to be two independent witnesses of the same ancient saying about two individuals dining on a couch. It is sometimes argued that the Apocalypse of Zephaniah is the third independent witness and that Apoc. Zeph. 2:2–4 contains “a traditional triadic proverb”<sup>654</sup> that has been recycled in Matt 24:40–41, Luke 17:34–35, and *Thomas* 61:1. In what follows, I will argue that this is very unlikely.

Papyrus codex MONB.AX,<sup>655</sup> written in Akhmīmic and published by Georg Steindorff in 1899,<sup>656</sup> preserves a passage from the Apocalypse of Zephaniah that is somewhat reminiscent of *Thomas* 61:1 and Luke 17:34. In this passage, Apoc. Zeph. 2:2–4 (= MONB.AX 1.8–16), Zephaniah sees three pairs of people. The following is the Coptic text restored by Pierre Lacau<sup>657</sup> along with its English translation:

ΤΟΤΕ ΔΙΝΟ ΔΡΩΜΕ CNO ΕΥΜΑ  
 ΖΕ ΖΙ ΟΥCΑ[Π Ζ]Ι ΟΥΖΟ ΝΟΥΩΤ ΔΙ  
 10 CΩΝΤ <ΔΡΑΥ> ΕΥΩ[ΕΧ]Ε ΕΤΙ ΔΕ ΔΙΝΟ ΔΚΕ  
 CΖΙΜΕ CΝΤ[Ε Ε]ΥΝΟΥΤ ΖΙ ΟΥCΑΠ Ν  
 ΟΥΜΗΧΑΝ[Η Δ]ΝΑΚ ΔΕ ΔΙCΩΝΤ  
 ΔΡΑΥ ΕΥΩΕΧΕ ΔΟΥ ΔΙΝΟ [ΔΚΕ]  
 CNO ΖΙΧΝΝ Ο[Υ]ΜΑ ΝΝΚΑΤΕ<sup>658</sup> [ΕΠΟΥ]  
 15 Ε ΠΟΥΕ [Ν]ΜΑΥ [Ε]ΙΡΕ ΝΤΟΥΑ[...]  
 Α<sup>659</sup> ΖΙΧΝ [Π]ΟΥΜΑ ΝΝΚΑΤΕ

Then I saw two men walking together on one road. I watched <them> as they talked. And, moreover, I also saw two women grinding together at a mill. And I watched them as they talked. And I [also] saw two upon a place of lying, [each] one of them doing their ... upon [their] place of lying (trans. O.S. Wintermute, altered).

First, Zephaniah sees two men walking on a road together (Apoc. Zeph. 2:2 = MONB.AX 1.8–10). Then, he sees two women grinding together (Apoc. Zeph. 2:3 = MONB.AX 1.10–13). Finally, he sees the third pair (Apoc. Zeph. 2:4 = MONB.AX 1.13–16); this sentence is badly damaged, which makes interpreting it quite problematic. The word division proposed by Lacau for MONB.AX 1.14, ΖΙΧΝΝ ΟΥΜΑ ΝΝΚΑΤΕ, is somewhat justified by the fact that in this manuscript the letter *ν* is sometimes doubled before the indefinite article *οϋ*. Lacau refers to the two passages from the Apocalypse of

<sup>654</sup> Davies and Allison 1988–1997, 3:382.

<sup>655</sup> Thirteen leaves of this codex have survived. Seven of them are stored at the National Library in Paris as part of the group of papyri that bears the inventory number BnF Copte 135; the other six are at the Egyptian Museum in Berlin, bearing the inventory number P 1862.

<sup>656</sup> See Steindorff 1899, 34–108 and Schmidt 1925, 321.

<sup>657</sup> See Lacau 1966, 170–5.

<sup>658</sup> Lemm 1900, 3, fills the lacuna after ΖΙΧΝΝ Ο[Υ]ΜΑ ΝΝΚΑΤΕ with [ΝΟΥΩΤ], but does not restore the following line.

<sup>659</sup> The lacuna that is left without restoration probably conceals a Greek feminine noun that starts and ends with an alpha (ἀγωνία, ἀδικία, ἀνομία, etc.). Cf. Lacau 1966, 174.

Elijah in the same manuscript: MONB.AX 40.12–13 and 42.11–13.<sup>660</sup> It is worth noting, however, that the scribe did not always follow this rule.<sup>661</sup> This being the case, it seems to be more likely that *ν* and *ογ* belong together to form a possessive article.<sup>662</sup> The missing letter in MONB.AX 1.16 should thus be restored accordingly: [ν]ογμα.<sup>663</sup> Moreover, I follow Bernd Jörg Diebner’s restoration of MONB.AX 1.14 and read [πογ] instead of [επογ].<sup>664</sup> Thus, MONB.AX 1.13–16 should be restored as follows:

αἶνο [ακε]cno ριχν νο[γ]μα ἡῖκατε [πογ]ε πογε [ῃ]μαγ [ε]ιρε ἡτογα[...]α ριχῆ [ν]ογμα  
ἡῖκατε

And I [also] saw two upon their places of lying. [Each] one of them does their [...] upon [their] place[s] of lying.

Having discussed the text of the passage, we may now proceed to its interpretation. Some scholars have claimed that Apoc. Zeph. 2:2–4 provides the original version of the parable that is alluded to in Matt 24:40–41, Luke 17:34–35, and *Thomas* 61:1.<sup>665</sup> But as Diebner has pointed out, this is very unlikely.<sup>666</sup> A number of manuscripts, including D, assimilate Luke with Matt 24:40 by adding verse 17:36 and thus have three pairs of people: two men reclining (17:34), two women grinding (17:35), and two men in a field (17:36). In a similar fashion, D and several other manuscripts add a verse about two men reclining after Matt 24:41. It is reasonable to surmise that Apoc. Zeph. 2:2–4 depends on a similar harmonization of synoptic accounts.

It is worth noting that one of the harmonizing features in Apoc. Zeph. 2:2–4 seems to tie this text to the Egyptian soil. According to Apoc. Zeph. 2:3, Zephaniah sees two women grinding “together at a mill.” This reading is a combination of the Lukan phrase ἐν τῷ μύλῳ (Luke 17:35) and the Matthean phrase ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό (Matt 24:41). It seems that the only other text that has the same reading is the Akhmīmic version of Luke 17:35a, which reads, αογ cητ[ε εγcικ]ε ρι ογcαι ρην ογμηx[αηη], “and two (women) [grinding] together at a mill.”<sup>667</sup>

As L.-Th. Lefort pointed out regarding the Akhmīmic Luke, “parfois il livre des variantes qu’on ne rencontre nulle part ailleurs, et dont plusieurs viennent manifestement du texte de Mathieu.”<sup>668</sup> “Together at a mill” is one of these unique harmonizing readings. Since the Apocalypse of Zephaniah is familiar with this reading, it is likely that the Apocalypse of Zephaniah is dependent on the textual tradition behind the Akhmīmic Luke. And since the only two texts containing the harmonizing reading “together at a mill” are in Akhmīmic, it seems reasonable to conclude that the textual tradition

<sup>660</sup> Lacau 1966, 173. MONB.AX 40.12–13: [τ]νογ τῆ]ηαμογ ρῆν ογζεβογ[ογνε], “Today we will die in a famine”; MONB.AX 42.11–13: σεκογ αρεῖ ἡτcαρζ ἡπκοcμοc σεxι ἡνογcαρζ ἡπῆα, “They lay down the flesh of the world, they receive spiritual flesh.” It is worth noting that the latter example is, in fact, ambiguous: σεxι ἡνογcαρζ ἡπῆα might be understood as “they receive their spiritual flesh.”

<sup>661</sup> See, e.g., MONB.AX 43.13–14: qηατανο ἡογπε ἡβῖρε ἡῖ ογκαρ ἡβῖρε, “He will create a new heaven and a new earth.”

<sup>662</sup> Cf. Diebner 2003, 1178.

<sup>663</sup> Cf. Diebner 2003, 1204.

<sup>664</sup> See Diebner 1979, 57.

<sup>665</sup> See Wintermute 1983, 509; cf. Davies and Allison 1988–1997, 3:382.

<sup>666</sup> See Diebner 2003, 1177–8.

<sup>667</sup> Lefort 1953, 26.

<sup>668</sup> Lefort 1953, 20.



in question was confined to the Theban region.<sup>669</sup> It is likely, therefore, that the Apocalypse of Zephaniah did not contain this reading before this text was translated into Akhmīmic. Thus, the Akhmīmic text must preserve a Christian redaction of the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, which cannot be earlier than the fourth century CE.

This observation seems to be in complete agreement with Diebner's conclusion that the Akhmīmic version of the Apocalypse of Zephaniah comes from "die 'koptisch-mönchische' Bearbeitung."<sup>670</sup> Diebner reaches this conclusion from his analysis of Apoc. Zeph. 2:4. Like *Thomas* 61, this passage reiterates the masculine pronoun πογε (πογα in Sahidic), meaning that in all likelihood both individuals are male. The text, therefore, describes two separately reclined men. According to Diebner, this passage seems to be reminiscent of one of the Pachomian rules that seek to prevent the monks from homosexual activities: "Nor shall you sit two together on a mat or a carpet" (Pachomius, *Praec.* 95; trans. A. Vielleux). Diebner suggests that the monk that was responsible for the Akhmīmic version of the Apocalypse of Zephaniah altered the text that was similar to Luke 17:34 in order to avoid its homoerotic overtones and bring it closer to the cenobitic customs.<sup>671</sup>

In sum, it does not seem plausible that Apoc. Zeph. 2:2–4 is a witness to the original and unabbreviated version of the parable attested in Matt 24:40–41, Luke 17:34–35, and *Thomas* 61:1. This passage is preserved by a single manuscript in Akhmīmic, and it seems that the Akhmīmic text contains several traces of a fourth-century Christian redaction. Moreover, even if we assume that a non-redacted version of this passage was present in the Greek *Vorlage* of the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, it is very likely that, as Diebner has suggested, its author made use of the textual tradition that harmonized Matt 24:40–41 and Luke 17:34–35.

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<sup>669</sup> For this localization of Akhmīmic, see Funk 1988.

<sup>670</sup> Diebner 2003, 1230.

<sup>671</sup> See Diebner 2003, 1178–9, 1230.

## 10. *Thomas* and the Platonists on Freedom from Anger

In this chapter, I deal with the Platonist background of *Thomas* 7. I will revisit Howard M. Jackson's suggestion that *Thomas* 7 should be interpreted along the lines of Plato's allegory of human soul (*Resp.* 588b–592b) and show that this suggestion is basically correct. I demonstrate that certain modifications of Jackson's hypothesis are in order, and that the lion in the saying does not stand for the passions in general, but rather represents anger, as it does in Plato's train of thought.

### 10.1. The Text of *Thomas* 7

The following is the Coptic text of *Thomas* 7 and its English translation.<sup>672</sup>

7:1a πεχε ιϛ ουμακαριος πε πμογει παιει ετε πρωμε ναογομϣ

7:1b αγω ντε πμογει ωωπε ρρωμε

7:2a αγω ρβητ νβι πρωμε παιει ετε πμογει ναογομϣ

7:2b αγω πμογει ναωωπε ρρωμε

7:1a Jesus says, "Blessed is the lion that a person will eat

7:1b and the lion will become human.

7:2a And cursed is the person whom a lion will eat,

7:2b and the lion will become human."

A number of scholars,<sup>673</sup> most recently April D. DeConick,<sup>674</sup> Simon Gathercole,<sup>675</sup> and Peter Nagel,<sup>676</sup> noted that the last sentence is problematic, since it disrupts the would-be chiasmic structure of the saying (lion–man / lion–man / man–lion / man–lion) and suggested that the reading αγω πμογει ναωωπε ρρωμε is due to a mistake made during the Coptic stage of the transmission of the text. The last sentence of the Coptic text should thus be altered to αγω πρωμε ναωωπε ιμογει, "and the man will become a lion."

As Jackson convincingly demonstrates, such a transcriptional mistake behind *Thomas* 7:2b is unlikely.<sup>677</sup> We could suspect such a mistake if, as Jackson argues, the text of *Thomas* 7:1b were identical with that of *Thomas* 7:2b. In this case, we would be forced to imagine a careless scribe repeating *Thomas* 7:1b instead of copying the original Coptic text, which contained the chiasmic structure. In reality, however, *Thomas* 7:1b and *Thomas* 7:2b are not identical: *Thomas* 7:1b

<sup>672</sup> The part of the papyrus that may contain the Greek text of *Thomas* 7 (P.Oxy. 654.40–2) is badly damaged and is of little help for the reconstruction of the Greek *Vorlage* of the Coptic text. It is probable that P.Oxy. 654 contained a version of the lion saying, since line 40 undoubtedly reads [μα]χαρι[ος] ἐστιν. The legible letters on line 41 are the epsilon, sigma, and tau; the most likely restoration is ἔστ[αι]. The letter traces preceding ἔστ[αι] are paleographically ambiguous. Gathercole 2006, 357–8, points out that the usual reconstruction [λέ]ων is problematic and tentatively suggests καί. On line 42 only the nu is clear. All in all, I agree with Gathercole 2006, 359, that to restore the Greek text of P.Oxy. 654.40–2 is "an extremely hazardous, and probably superfluous, enterprise."

<sup>673</sup> See, e.g., Guillaumont et al. 1959, 4; Hofius 1960, 41–2; Haenchen 1961, 160; Montefiore and Turner 1962, 94; Leipoldt 1967, 26 and 57; Marcovich 1988, 70.

<sup>674</sup> See DeConick 2007, 66.

<sup>675</sup> See Gathercole 2014a, 228–9.

<sup>676</sup> See Nagel 2014, 110.

<sup>677</sup> Jackson 1985, 4–7.

comprises a conjunctive clause, whereas *Thomas* 7:2b employs the future tense. Thus, emending the Coptic text seems to be an unwarranted enterprise.

Jackson notes that the present wording of *Thomas* 7:2b might have resulted from a different kind of error: a translational one. That the text of *Thomas* 7:2b was the result of a mistake made by the Coptic translator was hesitantly suggested by Rodolphe Kasser already in 1961. Kasser hypothesized that the Greek *Vorlage* of both *Thomas* 7:1b and *Thomas* 7:2b read καὶ λέων ἔσται ἄνθρωπος. Because the phrasing was ambiguous, the Coptic translator would not have realized that *Thomas* 7:1b and *Thomas* 7:2b had different subjects.<sup>678</sup>

While Jackson admits that “this is an interesting suggestion and in itself within the realm of possibility,”<sup>679</sup> he still rejects this hypothesis. In his view, the difference in the Coptic wording of *Thomas* 7:1b and *Thomas* 7:2b must reflect a difference in the wording of their Greek *Vorlage*. This point is certainly valid, yet Jackson’s conclusion must be reconsidered in light of new evidence. When Jackson was working on his monograph, he was not aware of a source that strongly supports Kasser’s proposal.

As Dieter Lührmann has shown, Didymus the Blind was familiar with a saying similar to the one we have in *Thomas* 7.<sup>680</sup> Below is the relevant section from his commentary on Ps 43/44:12. The Greek words in bold face indicate the vocabulary of the lion saying disseminated throughout the passage. The underlined clauses demonstrate that Didymus’ version of the saying employs a chiasmic structure:

ἐὰν οὖν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ σώζων τὸ κατ’ εἰκόν[α] καὶ τὸ κ[αθ’] ὁμοίωσιν θ(εο)ῦ διδάσκαλος κατὰ Ἰ(ησοῦ)ν γενό[μενος] ἄγριον ἄνθρωπον διὰ τοῦ παιδεῦ[σαι] **φάγη** [καὶ ἀναλώσῃ αὐτὸν ἢ λέων ἐστίν, ἐκεῖνος βρωθεῖ]ς ὑπὸ τοῦ διδασκάλου καὶ τροφὴ αὐτοῦ γεγενημένος οὐκ **ἔσται λέων**. διὰ τοῦτο **μακάριός ἐστιν** καὶ μα[καρίζ]εται οὐχ ὅτι **λέων** ἐστίν, ἀλλ’ ὅτι **ἄνθρωπος γέγονεν**. εἰ δέ ποτε **ἄνθρωπος** λογικὸς καὶ λογικῶς κινού[μενος] ὑπὸ ὠμοθύμου τινὸς ἀγρίου ἀνθρώπου ἢ πονηρᾶς δυνάμεως βρωθείη, γίνεται λέων καὶ τάλας ἐσ[τίν] ὁ το]ιοῦτος. “οὐαί” γὰρ “**τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ** **δν φάγεται λέων**”.

Therefore, if the **man** that preserves what is according to God’s image and [likeness, having become a teacher like Jesus,] **eats** a wild man by means of education [and consumes him insofar as he is a lion, this one who was eaten]<sup>681</sup> by the teacher and became his food **will not be a lion**. Therefore, he **is blessed** and he is being blessed not because he is a **lion**, but because he became a man. But if a reasonable **man** who was led by reason was eaten by some savage-hearted wild man or by an evil force, he becomes a lion and such a man is wretched. For “**Woe to the man whom a lion will eat**” (Didymus the Blind, *Comm. Ps.* 315.27–316.4).

<sup>678</sup> See Kasser 1961, 38.

<sup>679</sup> Jackson 1985, 11.

<sup>680</sup> See Lührmann 1990, 312–6; Lührmann and Schlarb 2000, 116–7; Lührmann 2004, 164–7. Scholars of *Thomas* tend to ignore Lührmann’s publications on saying 7. Curiously, Roig Lanzillotta 2013, refers to Lührmann 1990, in a footnote, but does not mention Didymus’ version of the lion saying in his discussion of the text of *Thomas* 7.

<sup>681</sup> See Gronewald 1970, 138 and 140. For the reader’s convenience, I have translated, above, the reconstructed Greek text offered by Michael Gronewald in a footnote. Needless to say, the length of the lacuna makes every reconstruction a guesswork—this also applies to Gronewald’s filling of the lacuna that precedes this one. It should be noted, though, that the text in the square brackets does not significantly influence our understanding of the whole passage.

Even though Didymus quotes only one verse of the saying and paraphrases the rest, we can still easily see that it has almost the same structure as *Thomas 7*. The following table contrasts Didymus' version of the saying with Didymus' interpretation of it:

The lion saying according Didymus	Didymus' exegesis of the lion saying
Blessed is the lion	Blessed is the wild man
Whom a man will eat	Whose teacher is a reasonable man
And the lion will become a man.	For he is no longer wild.
And wretched is the man	And wretched is the reasonable man
Whom a lion will eat	Whose teacher is a wild man
And the man will become a lion.	For he is no longer reasonable.

The only major difference between the two versions of the saying is that, according to Didymus, the man who is eaten by the lion becomes a lion.<sup>682</sup> How, then, did this discrepancy come about? The most plausible explanation is that the reading of the Coptic *Thomas*, πμογει νααωπε ῑρωμε, is an erroneous translation of the Greek *Vorlage*.

While the reconstruction of the exact wording of the *Vorlage* of saying 7 would be a hazardous undertaking, it seems very likely that the Greek version of *Thomas 7:2b* would have had the verb ἔσται with a double nominative construction. The translator would then have mistaken the nominative complement (λέων) for the subject (ἄνθρωπος) and vice versa; he would probably have been influenced by *Thomas 7:1b*, wherein λέων was in fact the subject, whereas ἄνθρωπος was the nominative complement.

Thus, Kasser's hypothesis seems to be correct. While there might be a grain of truth in Jackson's objection,<sup>683</sup> it would not vitiate Kasser's argument. The difference between the versions of the lion saying in Didymus and in the Coptic version of the Gospel of Thomas is best explained by my proposed scenario, in which the Coptic translator of the Gospel of Thomas overlooked the chiasmic structure of the saying and misinterpreted the double nominative.

To sum up, as the Didymus parallel demonstrates, the initial structure of *Thomas 7* was chiasmic: the lion is eaten by a man (*Thomas 7:1a*); the lion becomes a man (*Thomas 7:1b*); the man is eaten by a lion (*Thomas 7:2a*); the man becomes a lion (*Thomas 7:2b*). However, as Jackson initially noted, it is quite improbable that the reading αγω πμογει νααωπε ῑρωμε is due to scribal error and that the Coptic text must be emended. Rather, this reading is due to the Coptic translator's misunderstanding of the double nominative construction in the Greek text.

<sup>682</sup> Pace Lührmann 1990, 314–5; Lührmann 2004, 165. I fail to understand why Lührmann thinks that the version of the lion saying that Didymus knew did not have the last line (“and the man will become a lion”).

<sup>683</sup> It cannot be ruled out that the different wording of ἦτε πμογει αωπε in *Thomas 7:1b* and πμογει νααωπε in *Thomas 7:2b* reflects a different wording of the corresponding verses in the Greek text.

## 10.2. Preliminary Remarks

There is little doubt that *Thomas 7* was intentionally formulated in an obscure fashion and therefore was open to various interpretations.<sup>684</sup> Yet it would be unreasonable to assume that there was no original meaning intended, and the saying was coined simply to puzzle or to amuse its readers.<sup>685</sup>

I surmise that *Thomas 7* addresses competent readers, and that the background of these readers allowed them to interpret the saying correctly, i.e. the way the author intended. The task, therefore, is to determine the readers' background in order to offer an interpretation of the saying that fits this background. The correct interpretation is the one that competent readers would find the most convincing. Of course, our conjectures regarding the readers' competence and the author's intention will always be, to a certain extent, a matter of speculation. It would be dishonest to promise more than a best guess. As Morton Smith puts it, "we can never recover the actual past event; therefore we have to accept, *faute de mieux*, the most probable explanation as the historical one."<sup>686</sup>

## 10.3. The Non-metaphorical Interpretations of *Thomas 7*

The most crucial question about *Thomas 7* is whether the saying is meant metaphorically—i.e. that the lion, and perhaps the man as well, stand for something else. In what follows, I show that the non-metaphorical interpretations of the saying are unsatisfactory, then discuss its possible metaphorical meaning. Two non-metaphorical interpretations of the saying have been offered so far, an ascetical one by Richard Valantasis and an eschatological one by Andrew Crislip. I deal with them separately below.

### 10.3.1. *Thomas 7* as a Dietary Regulation?

According to Valantasis, *Thomas 7* describes a hierarchy of being. A lion benefits from being eaten by a human, because it "rises to a higher place in the hierarchy." On the other hand, a human who either eats lions or is eaten by them suffers losses, because he is dragged into "the lower rungs in the hierarchy of being." Valantasis leaves open the possibility that the saying emerged "during the time of the formation of ascetic and monastic communities" and that its focus "revolves about the question of eating meat, as opposed to observing a vegetarian diet, and to carefully regulating a very small intake of food."<sup>687</sup>

There is no doubt that a lion can easily eat a human, but the opposite process would have been quite unusual in ancient times. Otto Keller went as far as to write, "Das Fleisch der erlegten Löwen wurde natürlich nicht gegessen."<sup>688</sup> There are, however, at least two ancient authors who discuss the edibility of lions, Pliny the Elder and Galen.<sup>689</sup>

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<sup>684</sup> Cf. Uro 2003, 41.

<sup>685</sup> Pace François Bovon, who calls *Thomas 7* "senseless words" (Bovon 2009, 171).

<sup>686</sup> Smith 1996, 1:4.

<sup>687</sup> Valantasis 2000, 64–65.

<sup>688</sup> Keller 1909–1913, 1:44.

<sup>689</sup> The references are from Steier 1927, 982.

In his treatise on black bile, Galen says that “those who willingly (ῥᾷδέως) eat lions, lionesses, panthers, leopards, bears and wolves leave aside the spleen as being inedible” (*Atr. bil.* 7.7 = 5.134 Kühn; trans. M. Grant, altered). The point is that the spleen of the animals of a hot and dry temperament is inedible, while the rest of them can be digested. In this passage, Galen does not seem to be speculating, but rather appears to be aware of real cases of lion consumption.

In his treatise on the powers of foods, he writes, “Some people serve bears, although they are much worse than lions and leopards, boiling them once or twice” (*Alim. fac.* 3.1.10 = 6.664 Kühn; trans. M. Grant, altered). Galen says that bear meat is worse than lion meat, yet he attests its consumption (cf. Petronius, *Sat.* 66).<sup>690</sup>

Hence, I would like to point out that Crislip obviously goes too far when he says, “To eat lion flesh would place one among the most bizarre of the barbarians, barbarians who exist perhaps only in the realm of imagination.”<sup>691</sup> Even the passage from Pliny the Elder, cited by Crislip in order to validate his statement, is not as obvious as it might seem.

In his *Nat.* 6.195, Pliny lists a number of peoples that he himself qualifies as fictitious. Among others, he mentions “the eaters of wild animals” (agriophagi) “who live chiefly (maxime) on the flesh of panthers and lions” (trans. H. Rackham). The question is what exactly makes Pliny mark these agriophagi as fiction. Perhaps, the word “maxime” is the key. Pliny seems to be saying that, while lion flesh is edible, it is hard to believe that there are people whose main diet is lion meat.

This being said, I still side with Crislip in his general conclusion that “if one were to compose a λόγος σοφῶν designed to impart a lesson about ascetical fasting, one could much more appropriately choose a representative animal that would normally constitute part of the audience’s diet.”<sup>692</sup> Even though Galen is a witness to the fact that lion-eating was not entirely nonsensical in the ancient world, it would still have been a rare and unusual practice. Therefore, it is very unlikely that in *Thomas 7* the eating of meat is exemplified by the consumption of lion flesh.

### 10.3.2. *Thomas 7* as a Discourse on Resurrection Physiology?

Crislip’s own suggestion is that *Thomas 7* reflects early Christian speculations on the bodily resurrection that are attested in a number of sources, e.g. in the treatise *De resurrectione*, ascribed to Athenagoras. *Thomas 7*, in Crislip’s view, deals with two theological issues, (1) what happens to animals eaten by a resurrected human in his or her earthly life, and (2) how a human body eaten by a lion can be resurrected. The answer to the first issue is that those animals are “blessed,” because they “share in the eschatological blessings that are God’s special dispensation to humans.” As for the second issue, the body will be resurrected, even though it was eaten. According to Crislip, the resurrected one is “cursed” in the same fashion Jesus is “cursed” in Gal 3:13.<sup>693</sup>

Although the proposed interpretation is quite elegant, its weaknesses prevail over its advantages for a couple reasons. First, it is open to the same criticism as the one discussed previously: given that lion consumption was a rare and unusual practice, why would the lion serve as an example of an animal eaten by a human? The second part of Crislip’s interpretation also seems unpersuasive: there is no early Christian source that states that all the humans that are supposed to be resurrected are

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<sup>690</sup> Keller 1909–1913, 1:179–180.

<sup>691</sup> Crislip 2007, 604.

<sup>692</sup> Crislip 2007, 604.

<sup>693</sup> Crislip 2007, 607–609.

cursed. Paul's notion of Jesus being "cursed" comes from his exegesis of Deut 27:26 and 21:23. Nothing indicates that a similar train of thought is presupposed in *Thomas 7*.

Since the non-metaphorical interpretations of the saying do not seem to be convincing, we have to surmise that the lion in the saying serves as a representation of a different entity. I believe that there is at least one lion metaphor that might have been known by the competent reader of *Thomas 7*. It comes from the Platonist tradition and describes anger as a lion that lives inside every human being. The suggestion that the symbolism of *Thomas 7* might be indebted to Plato's allegory of human soul was first proposed by Howard M. Jackson. It is therefore necessary to outline and evaluate Jackson's interpretation of *Thomas 7*.

#### 10.4. Jackson's Hypothesis

Three main assertions seem to constitute the core of Jackson's hypothesis.

(1) The lion and the man in *Thomas 7* come from Plato's allegory of the soul.<sup>694</sup> I believe that this suggestion is correct; I will discuss Plato's allegory in detail in section 10.5.

(2) While Plato thought that anger was a potential ally of reason, the author of *Thomas 7* denied that there was any nobility in anger. He followed the Stoics, who considered anger a passion.<sup>695</sup> From the point of view of the author of the saying, the appetitive and the spirited parts of human soul are confusingly similar, if not the same thing. Hence, the lion in *Thomas 7*, according to Jackson, is a metaphor for human passions. On the one hand, I agree that Stoicism is the key witness of the anthropological shift that led to the reevaluation of anger in antiquity. On the other, if the author of *Thomas 7* did not make any distinction between anger and the appetites of the flesh, why would he appeal to Plato's allegory at all? Besides, why would the lion metaphorically represent this amalgam of the appetitive and the spirited parts of the soul?

(3) Finally, as an advocate of the reading preserved by the Coptic text, Jackson attempted to offer a Platonist interpretation of *Thomas 7:2b*, "and the lion becomes man." As Jackson puts it, Plato and *Thomas 7* agree that even if the passions prevail over the true self, the latter "is unaltered because it is unalterable." Referring to *Phaedr.* 249b, Jackson notes, "in Plato's theory of the transmigration of souls a human soul may live the life of a beast, but it remains a *human* soul."<sup>696</sup> Curiously, Jackson quite elegantly explains why, according to *Thomas 7:2b*, the man eaten by the lion does not become a lion (although, as we now know, he actually does), but does not explain why, in his view, the lion who ate the man becomes a man.

I think that we do not need to turn to *Phaedrus* in order to understand *Thomas 7*; rather, we need to take a closer look at the allegory of the soul presented in *Respublica*.

#### 10.5. The Inner Lion in Plato

According to Plato, the human soul is tripartite; it consists of the rational part (τὸ λογιστικόν), the irrational and appetitive part (τὸ ἀλόγιστόν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικόν), and the spirited part (τὸ θυμοειδές) (*Resp.* 436a–441c). According to Plato's allegory, the appetitive part is like a "multicolored beast

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<sup>694</sup> Jackson 1985, 184–7.

<sup>695</sup> Jackson 1985, 194–5.

<sup>696</sup> Jackson 1985, 203.

with a ring of many heads” (trans. G. M. A. Grube and C. D. C. Reeve), while the spirited one is like a lion and the rational one like a human being; these three creatures are united into one, and this unity appears to be like a human being (588c–d). Therefore, there are two men in the allegory, “the inner man” (ὁ ἐντὸς ἄνθρωπος; 589b) and the outward, or the composite one.

It is worth noting that the imagery of feeding and starving is quite important for the allegory. The one who commits injustice *feeds* the beast, the lion and all that pertains to the lion (τὰ περὶ τὸν λέοντα), and at the same time makes the inner man *starve*. If the inner man does not intervene, the beast and the lion will *eat* each other *up* (588e–589a). Plato does not explicitly say that the beast or the lion can devour the inner man, but this seems to be an option as well.

As I will try to show later, up to this point *Thomas 7* is completely like-minded with Plato. Yet, there is also a key area of disagreement. In 589a–b, Socrates says that, if someone is just, his inner man will dominate over the composite man, which means that he will take care of the beast, make the leonine nature (ἡ τοῦ λέοντος φύσις) his ally, and become friends with both the lion and the beast. As Crislip has already pointed out in his criticism of the Jackson’s hypothesis, while *Thomas 7* speaks of the annihilation of the lion, Plato suggests working in concord with it.<sup>697</sup> Yet it does not mean that the Platonist interpretation of *Thomas 7* should be rejected once and for all.

I suggest that the objective of *Thomas 7* is to correct Plato’s anthropology. According to *Thomas 7*, there is no way the inner man and the inner lion can peacefully coexist. They are invariably enemies, and, in order to live, one of them has to get rid of the other one. There are two questions that I need to answer in order to prove my case. First, what does the inner lion stand for? Second, why do Plato’s views on the relationship between the man and the lion differ from the views of the author of *Thomas 7*?

#### 10.6. The Lion within a Human is Anger

According to Jackson, the author of *Thomas 7* considered the beast and the lion in Plato’s allegory of the soul one and the same thing. In fact, a reader of the last pages of the ninth book of *Respublica* might have an impression that Plato intentionally fuses the soul’s appetitive and spirited parts. First, he says that “the lion-like part” (τὸ λεοντώδες) is also “snake-like” (τὸ ὀφειώδες), then he says that the inner lion can become an ape (590b) and finally simply calls both the lion and the beast “the animals” (τὰ θρέμματα) (590c). From then on, Plato opposes the rational part of the soul with the rest of it, so that the spirited and the appetitive parts are collectively designated as “the beast-like parts of human nature” (τὰ θηριώδη τῆς φύσεως) (589d; cf. 591b–c and *Pol.* 309c).<sup>698</sup> Yet Plato never compromises his metaphor by calling the whole bestial component of the soul a lion. The lion in Plato’s allegory is unambiguously associated with a particular emotion, and I think the same is the case with *Thomas 7*.

Therefore, the weakest point of Jackson’s hypothesis is that in his view the lion in *Thomas 7* no longer stands for anger in particular, but rather represents the passions in general. As Risto Uro puts it, “Why would the lion, representing the nobler feelings, stand for sexual passion, if the saying had

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<sup>697</sup> Crislip 2007, 601–2.

<sup>698</sup> Of course, Plato by no means contradicts himself, since the soul’s dichotomy and trichotomy are not to be understood as mutually exclusive doctrines. See section 10.8, below.



been modelled upon the Platonic trichotomous hybrid?”<sup>699</sup> But Jackson’s mistake can be modified. I believe the correct answer to Uro’s question would be that the lion in *Thomas* 7 represents anger, not the passions, and that anger for the author of the saying is no longer a noble feeling. This interpretation fits nicely into the context of *Thomas*. Moreover, the saying in this case would then be on the same page as contemporary trends in the Greco-Roman philosophy. In order to prove my case, I will now examine a few relevant features of Stoic ethics.

### 10.7. Stoics on Anger

As Jackson pointed out in his study, Stoic anthropology appears to be responsible for a peculiar shift in the philosophy of emotions. Stoicism maintained that anger was a passion and, therefore, was always opposed to virtue. Two Greek terms designate anger in Stoic philosophy, *ὀργή* and *θυμός*. The word *ὀργή* is considered a more general category and is employed more often; *θυμός* is considered a species of *ὀργή*. According to the school definition, *ὀργή* is a “passionate desire (*ἐπιθυμία*) to punish the one who seemingly committed injustice,” while *θυμός* is *ὀργή ἐναρχομένη*, i.e. “*ὀργή* on the rise” (*SVF* 3.397; cf. 3.395–6). Contrary to what Plato thought, Stoics maintained that anger is always hostile to reason. In Chrysippus’ view, anger (*θυμός*) was “an irrational and rejecting reason impulse (*φορά*)” that was most widely shared; *θυμός* was described as “the taking leave (*ἡ παραλλαγή*) and withdrawing from oneself (*ἡ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀναχώρησις*)” that was occasioned “by nothing other than the rejection of reason” (trans. P. de Lacy) (*SVF* 3.475).

It should be noted that the Stoics were in agreement with Plato in linking anger and lions. It is indeed remarkable, because one of the key Stoic principles is that only humans are rational beings and as such are capable of irrational emotions. Animals, by contrast, do not possess reason and therefore cannot be angry. As Seneca puts it in his lengthy treatise on anger, “wild animals are incapable of anger (*ira*<sup>700</sup>), as is everything, apart from man. Anger may be the enemy of reason. It cannot, all the same, come into being except where there is a place for reason” (*Ir.* 1.3.4; trans. J. M. Cooper and J. F. Procopé). Yet later on Seneca says that animals are capable of being angry. Lions are, of course, the most obvious example for the author:

“The noblest animals are reckoned to be those with a lot of anger in them.” It is a mistake to find an example for man in creatures that have impulse in place of reason: man has reason in place of impulse. But not even in their case is the same impulse of use to all. Temper (*iracundia*) aids the lion, fear the stag, aggression the hawk, flight the dove. Anyway, it is not even true that the best animals are those most prone to anger (*iracundissima*). I may very well think that wild beasts, that get their food by seizing their prey, are the better the angrier (*iratiores*) they are: but the endurance of the ox and the obedience of the horse to the bridle, are what I would praise (*Ir.* 2.16.1–2; trans. J. M. Cooper and J. F. Procopé).

<sup>699</sup> Uro 2003, 41.

<sup>700</sup> The word “*ira*” in Seneca’s work is the Latin equivalent of Greek *ὀργή*. Cf., e.g., Seneca’s reference to Aristotle’s definition of *ὀργή* as *ὄρεξις ἀντιλυπήσεως* (*De an.* 403a) in *Ir.* 1.3.3: *Aristotelis finitio non multum a nostra abest; ait enim iram esse cupiditatem doloris reponendi.*

Seneca obviously contradicts himself when he says that lions can feel rage (*iracundia*). The only possible explanation seems to be that the association of a given emotion with a given animal, e.g. the association of lions with anger, was so commonplace that it somehow suggested itself. Galen points at the same contradiction in Chrysippus' thought. In order to prove that both reason and the passions reside in the chest, Chrysippus quotes numerous poets, including a verse from Tyrtaeus, "with a tawny lion's spirit (*θυμός*) in his breast"; Galen comments:

We all know very well that a lion has spirit (*θυμός*), even before hearing it from Tyrtaeus; and yet it was not appropriate for Chrysippus to cite the line, since Chrysippus denies spirit to lions. He holds that none of the irrational animals has the spirited (*τὸ θυμοειδές*) or the desiderative (*τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν*) or rational part (*τὸ λογιστικόν*); as I said also in the first book, every Stoic, so far as I know, contrary to all clear evidence deprives them of all these (parts). But Tyrtaeus, like Homer and Hesiod, and, in short, all poets, says that lions have the most violent spirit, and that is why they compare the most spirited (*θυμοειδέστατος*) persons to lions. And quite apart from the poets, all men speak of very high-spirited persons (*τοὺς θυμικωτάτους*) as lions, and every day without end they urge athletes on in this way (Galen, *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 3.3.25–9 = 5.309–10 Kühn = 275–6 Müller; trans. P. de Lacy).

This passage from Galen is quite important for understanding *Thomas* 7. It shows that the notion of the lion as anger incarnate is by no means peculiar to Plato, even though it was Plato himself who portrayed anger as the inner lion. On the contrary, the affinity between lions and anger was common knowledge in the ancient world.<sup>701</sup> Even the Stoics appealed to this common knowledge, although they rejected the idea that animals have emotions.

As a matter of fact, there was even a Stoic explanation for a lion's anger. According to Aristotle, from the physiological point of view, anger is "the boiling (*ζέσις*) of the blood and heat around the heart" (*De an.* 403a–b).<sup>702</sup> This definition was adopted by the Stoics (*SVF* 2.878; 2.886; 3.416). In *Ir.* 2.19.2–3, Seneca points out that "the fiery constitution of the soul will produce wrathful men (*iracundos fervida animi natura faciet*)." Heat level is actually the main parameter that distinguishes lion souls from human ones:

οἱ μὲν γὰρ Στωϊκοὶ λέγουσι μὴ εἶναι ψυχὴν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς κράσεως τῶν στοιχείων ἀποτελεῖσθαι τὴν γένεσιν· ὅταν μὲν γὰρ πλεονάσῃ τὸ θερμόν, ποιεῖ τὸν λέοντα, ὅθεν, φησί, καὶ θυμικός ἐστιν· ὅταν δὲ κατὰ λόγον καὶ σχεδὸν ἐξ ἴσου συνέλθῃ, ποιεῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

For the Stoics say that the soul does not (always) exist, but that it comes into being from the blending of elements. Therefore, when the hot element prevails, the elements produce the lion, and that is why, as the Stoics say, the lion is wrathful. And when the elements combine proportionally and more or less evenly, they produce the human being (*SVF* 2.789).

<sup>701</sup> See Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, 210–1; cf. the examples from Statius, Lucan, Silius, and Virgil discussed in Braund and Gilbert 2003, 256–8, 61, 63, 66–7.

<sup>702</sup> See also *Crat.* 419e, where Plato says that the word *θυμός* derives "from the raging and boiling of the soul" (*ἀπὸ τῆς θύσεως καὶ ζέσεως τῆς ψυχῆς*), and *Tim.* 69c–70b, where *θυμός* is located in the chest.

To sum up, Stoic authors do not refer to the allegory of the soul from Plato's *Respublica*, they do not portray anger as the lion within a human being, and they do not speak of the transformation of a lion into a man or vice versa. Still, the Stoics were familiar with the notion of the extreme angriness of lions and frequently appealed to this notion, even though this made them contradict themselves, since they maintained that irrational emotions belonged to the human realm. This indicates that the association of lions with anger was a *locus communis* for the ancients. Moreover, the fact that Stoics considered anger a dangerous and most shared vice points us in the direction of how Plato's allegory might have been read in the first centuries CE and why the inner lion could no longer be the inner man's ally.

#### 10.8. Tripartite or Bipartite?

It is worth noting that, while Stoics certainly played a major role in demoting anger to the level of the passions, the reevaluation of the role of anger is evident already in Plato and the early Academy. As I have already noted, at the end of the ninth book of his *Respublica*, Plato sets the rational part of the human soul in opposition to the other two, which now fall under the umbrella term "the beast-like parts of human nature" (589d). As D. A. Rees noted in his seminal article, this tendency towards a bipartition of the soul is also present in the tenth book of *Respublica* and in *Timaeus*.<sup>703</sup> In these latter texts, Plato tends to see the spirited and the appetitive parts as a unity, the irrational and mortal part of the soul, as opposed to the rational and immortal one.

Admittedly, "Plato nowhere explicitly abandons the tripartition of the soul."<sup>704</sup> It is worth noting, however, that Plato's last work, *Leges*, "carefully avoids committing itself definitely either to a bipartition or to a tripartition." The most remarkable passage here is *Leg.* 863b, "where it is left undetermined, whether θυμός is a μέρος of the soul or a πάθος."<sup>705</sup> According to Rees, the main reason for considering θυμός a separate part of the soul "lay in the political structure of the ideal state."<sup>706</sup> The late Plato "was no longer concerned to advocate a three-class state on the basis of a three-class soul,"<sup>707</sup> and, therefore, did not consider the difference between the two ways to partition the soul important.<sup>708</sup>

While the evolution of Plato's thought on this issue may be disputed, it seems clear that the Platonists of the Old Academy knew that "the fundamental division of the soul was bipartite."<sup>709</sup> The evidence in support of this claim comes from Aristotle. In *Protrepticus*, a dialogue written at the time when he still belonged to the Academy, Aristotle claims that the soul has two parts: one of those "has reason and thought," another one "follows and is of a nature such as to be ruled" (fr. 6 Ross = fr. B

<sup>703</sup> See Rees 1957, 112–113.

<sup>704</sup> Rees 1957, 113.

<sup>705</sup> Rees 1960, 196.

<sup>706</sup> Rees 1957, 114.

<sup>707</sup> Rees 1960, 197.

<sup>708</sup> It is also worth noting that, as a rule, Plato in *Leges* characterizes anger negatively. As Sassi 2008, 137, notes, "although in the *Laws* Plato continues to attribute to θυμός an important role in moral psychology, in this text his attention is focused more on its irrational and uncontrollable manifestations, which make it a decidedly unlikely candidate for that alliance (συμμάχια) with reason which is hinted at in both the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*"; cf. Schöpsdau 2011, 301.

<sup>709</sup> Dillon 1993a, 139.

60–1 Düring = Iamblichus, *Protr.* 7; trans. J. Barnes and G. Lawrence).<sup>710</sup> In *Magna Moralia* 1182a23–6, he ascribes this view to Plato himself.

The Middle Platonists are, of course, well aware of Plato's tripartition of the soul, yet, as Runia has observed, "they regard the division into rational and irrational as more basic."<sup>711</sup> According to Plutarch, the human soul has two parts, "the intelligent and rational one" (τὸ νοερὸν καὶ λογιστικόν) and "the affective, irrational, variable, and disorderly one" (τὸ παθητικὸν καὶ ἄλογον καὶ πολυπλανές καὶ ἄτακτον). The latter, in turn, is divided into the appetitive part and the spirited one (*Virt. mor.* 442a). Seneca, who in this case is influenced by the Platonist tradition,<sup>712</sup> maintains that the soul is divided into two parts, the rational one and the irrational one (*Ep.* 92.1), and that the irrational part, in turn, consists of a spirited part that depends on emotions (*pars animosa posita in adfectionibus*) and a lower part that is addicted to pleasures (*pars humilis voluptatibus dedita*) (92.8). Alcinous in his handbook says that the soul is divided into two parts, the ruling one (τὸ ἡγεμονικόν) and the affective one (τὸ παθητικόν); the latter, in turn, consists of the spirited part (τὸ θυμικόν) and the appetitive one (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) (*Didasc.* 5.2; 17.4). Galen distinguishes two forms of the soul (τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς εἶδη): the rational one (τὸ λογιστικόν) and the irrational one (τὸ ἄλογον), the latter of which is twofold (*Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 9.6.61 = 5.776 Kühn = 794 Müller). Finally, Clement of Alexandria, who undoubtedly adopted the Platonist tripartition of the soul (see, e.g., *Strom.* 3.9.68.5; 5.12.80.9; *Paed.* 3.1.1.2),<sup>713</sup> maintained that anger (θυμός) and desire (ἐπιθυμία) constitute the irrational part of the soul (τὸ ἄλογον μέρος) (*Strom.* 5.8.53.1).

Admittedly, even demoted to passion and absorbed into the irrational part of the soul, anger still does not necessarily have to be an enemy to reason. Alcinous teaches us that our emotions (πάθη) are divisible into the savage ones (ἄγρια) and the tame ones (ἡμερα).<sup>714</sup> Anger belongs to the latter category, and it is necessary "for repelling and taking vengeance on enemies" (*Didasc.* 32.4; trans. J. Dillon). Yet, as I will show in section 10.9, Alcinous' is not the view that was generally accepted among his fellow Platonists.

### 10.9. Platonists on Anger

In this section, I discuss the evidence for the negative attitude towards anger in the Middle Platonist tradition. Many Platonists and Platonizing authors disagreed with what Plato said in *Respublica* and claimed that anger must be eradicated. I show that this is the case with at least four prominent authors, Philo, Plutarch, Galen, and Clement. The Thomasine attitude towards the lion is, in my opinion, instigated by this intellectual trend.

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<sup>710</sup> Cf. *Eth. Nic.* 1102a26–8, where Aristotle says that, according to οἱ ἐξωτερικοὶ λόγοι, one part of the soul has reason and one does not. According to Rees 1957, 117–8, Aristotle here refers to his *Protrepticus*.

<sup>711</sup> Runia 1986, 305.

<sup>712</sup> See Costa 1988, 214.

<sup>713</sup> The references are from Lilla 1971, 81.

<sup>714</sup> As Dillon 1993a, 196, notes, this division ultimately derives from Plato's allegory of the soul, where Socrates says that some of the heads of the many-headed beast are tame and some are savage.

### 10.9.1. Philo<sup>715</sup>

In *Leg.* 3.114–5, Philo argues that our soul is tripartite (τριμερής) and that the head is the seat of the rational part (τὸ λογιστικόν), the breast of the spirited part (τὸ θυμικόν), and the abdomen and the belly of the appetitive part (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν) (3.115; cf. 1.70). As David T. Runia has demonstrated, Philo’s trilocation of the soul in this passage is inspired by the physiological section of Plato’s *Timaeus* (69c–89d).<sup>716</sup>

Philo considers Plato’s tripartition and trilocation of the soul to be the key to interpreting God’s curse on the serpent in Gen 3:14 LXX, “upon your chest (στῆθος) and belly (κοιλία) you shall go” (NETS).<sup>717</sup> According to Philo, the serpent in Gen 3:14 represents pleasure.<sup>718</sup> The breast and the belly represent the parts of the human soul located in them. Thus, the meaning of Gen 3:14 is that pleasure operates in the spirited and the appetitive parts of the soul:

For passion (τὸ πάθος) has its lair in these parts of the body, the breast and the belly. When pleasure (ἡ ἡδονή) has the materials it needs to produce it, it haunts the belly and the parts below it. But when it is at a loss for these materials, it occupies the breast where wrath (ὁ θυμός) is; for lovers of pleasure when deprived of their pleasures grow bitter and angry (*Leg.* 3.114; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

As Runia points out, despite the fact that Philo is clearly drawing upon Plato’s *Timaeus*,

he associates not only the ἐπιθυμητικόν with pleasure but also the θυμικόν (lovers of pleasure become angry when deprived of it). It could thus be argued that he is losing sight of the intermediate status of the spirited part between the rational and the appetitive parts, for this part is presented by Plato as often assisting rather than opposing the rational part.<sup>719</sup>

Thus, Philo takes issue with Plato’s notion of anger. According to *Leg.* 3.114, anger belongs to the realm of passion.<sup>720</sup> It is “a fierce disease of the soul” (νόσημα χαλεπὸν ψυχῆς) (3.124) and “a discordant offspring of the quarrelsome and contentious soul” (τῆς ἐριστικῆς καὶ φιλονείκου ψυχῆς πλημμελὲς γέννημα) (3.131). Clearly, then, a perfect human being, such as Moses, cannot be associated with the spirited element of the soul. So when the Pentateuch says that Moses separated the breast (τὸ στηθύνιον) from the ram of consecration (Lev 8:29 LXX), what it means is that he cut anger out from his soul (3.129).

<sup>715</sup> For a discussion of anger in Philo, see also Dunderberg 2015, 46–8.

<sup>716</sup> See Runia 1986, 306–8. That it was specifically *Timaeus* that Philo had in mind is clear from the numerous allusions to it in *Leg.* 3.115; the Philonic images of the bodyguards (δορυφόροι), the citadel (ἄκρα ἐν πόλει), and the breastplate (θώραξ) undoubtedly come from *Timaeus* (see θώραξ in *Tim.* 69e; ἀκρόπολις in *Tim.* 70a; δορυφορικὴ οἴκησις in *Tim.* 70b).

<sup>717</sup> Philo’s exegesis was probably instigated by the shared vocabulary of Gen 3:14 and the physiological section of *Timaeus* (69e: στῆθος; 73a: κοιλία).

<sup>718</sup> See *Leg.* 3.61; 3.66; 3.68; 3.75–6.

<sup>719</sup> Runia 1986, 303.

<sup>720</sup> Thus, according to Philo, the soul is fundamentally bipartite. As Dillon 1996, 175, has noted, each anthropological models that Philo uses, including a division into the rational, spirited, and appetitive parts, “expresses some aspects of the truth, but the most basic truth remains the division into rational and irrational.” For various types of division in Philo, see, e.g., Drummond 1888, 1:318–20; Billings 1919, 51–2; Wolfson 1962, 1:385–9; Baer 1970, 84; Runia 1986, 304.

Just as in the case of Gen 3:14, Philo's interpretation of Lev 8:29 draws its inspiration from Plato's trilocution of the soul. According to him, *στηθύνιον* (= *σῆθος*) in the biblical text metonymically stands for the part of the soul it contains, i.e. *θυμός*:

For it was the business of the man who loved virtue and was beloved of God, when he had contemplated the entire soul, to seize the breast (*τὸ σῆθος*), which is the spirited element (*ὁ θυμός*), and to cut it off and take it away, in order that, through the excision of the warlike part, the remainder might have peace (*εἰρήνη*) (*Leg.* 3.130; trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).

Thus, human perfection, according to Philo, presupposes the eradication of anger.<sup>721</sup> Philo shares this notion, as we will see shortly, with some of the later philosophers of a Platonist persuasion.

#### 10.9.2. Plutarch

Plutarch's most important work on the subject is *De cohibenda ira*. His position is formulated already in the Greek title of the work, "On Freedom from Anger" (*περὶ ἀποργησίας*). Anger is a passion (*πάθος*) and a disease (*νόσημα*) of the soul (462f). In fact, it is not just a passion, but "the most hated and the most despised of the passions" (455e; trans. W. C. Helmbold). On the other hand, freedom from anger is a divine attribute.<sup>722</sup> Zeus, the king of the gods, is called "the gracious one" (*μειλίχιος*); only the beings that are not divine and do not belong to the realm of Olympic gods (*οὐ θεῶν οὐδ' ὀλύμπιον*), the Erinyes and demons, are prone to anger (458b–c). Given that Plutarch was so fond of Plato's concept of assimilation to God (see *Sera* 550d–e),<sup>723</sup> this notion clearly has a direct bearing on his understanding of human perfection.

Plutarch even goes as far as to claim that anger "is not, as someone has said (*ὥς τις εἶπε*), like 'sinews of the soul' (*νεῦρα τῆς ψυχῆς*), but like the strainings and convulsions of the soul when it is stirred too vehemently in its impulse to defend itself" (457b–c; trans. W. C. Helmbold). This passage is quite remarkable, since it was none other than Plato's Socrates who considered anger to be the sinews of the soul (*Resp.* 411b).<sup>724</sup> Plutarch avoids saying Plato's name, probably out of respect,<sup>725</sup> yet he clearly implies that Plato is wrong to say that anger does not necessarily have to be eradicated.

Several scholars have claimed that, despite its overall negative attitude towards anger, *De cohibenda ira* nevertheless leaves some room for anger that comes from righteous indignation (*μισοσπονηρία*). According to William V. Harris, when Plutarch writes that "those of whom it is true that righteous indignation causes them frequently to be overwhelmed by anger should get rid of its excessive and violent form" (463b; trans. W. C. Helmbold), he implies "that the righteously indignant

<sup>721</sup> What is also worth noting here is that, according to Philo, there is an intimate connection between freedom from anger and inner peace. As I have pointed out in chapter 8, Philo also associates peace with stability, another aspect of human perfection. Thus, it seems fair to surmise that Philo's "transcendental" standing presupposes freedom from anger, and vice versa.

<sup>722</sup> Cf. Betz and Dillon 1978, 188 and Harris 2001, 120.

<sup>723</sup> As Tarrant 2007, 419–20, notes, assimilation to the divine was "the standard goal of Middle Platonism." Cf. the discussion of Galen and Clement below.

<sup>724</sup> Philodemus in *Ir.* fr. 17 col. 31, ll. 24–32, ascribes the same view to "some of the Peripatetics" (*ἐνιοι τῶν Περιπατητικῶν*).

<sup>725</sup> Dumortier and Defradas 1975, 294.

may properly feel *moderate* anger.”<sup>726</sup> It should be noted, however, that Plutarch was quite skeptical about righteous indignation itself. Just a little later he says that he who turns reason from the external things to what is inside (ἐξωθεν εἴσω τὸν λογισμὸν ἀναστρέφῃ) and keeps asking himself, whether he is, in fact, as corrupt as others,<sup>727</sup> will not be subject to righteous indignation.<sup>728</sup> I am therefore inclined to side with John M. Dillon and Hans Dieter Betz, who conclude that the doctrine of *De cohibenda ira* is “straightforward and uncompromising.”<sup>729</sup>

It is necessary, however, to clarify Dillon’s position. According to him, Plutarch’s disapproval of anger in *De cohibenda ira* is due to the fact that in some of his ethical works, he writes “within a well-defined tradition, that of the Cynic-Stoic diatribe, on the basic themes, or τόποι, of which he is only playing a series of variations.” It is for this reason that *De cohibenda ira* “advocates the extirpation of anger (ἀποργησία) rather than its mere control,” while, in his other work on the same topic, *De ira*, Plutarch expresses a different outlook, viz. “that accords with his philosophical stance on ethics.” In this latter work, Plutarch “adopts the (Platonic and Peripatetic) view that anger, θυμός, should be made ‘the ally of virtue’ and thus subject to Reason, and that only its excess should be expelled from the soul.”<sup>730</sup>

It is reasonable, therefore, to briefly discuss the contents of *De ira*. Unfortunately, only one fragment of this work has been preserved (fr. 27 Bernardakis = fr. 148 Sandbach). Stobaeus cites it in his *Anth.* 3.20.70. Stobaeus’ citation seems to be an epitome of the work rather than a mere excerpt.<sup>731</sup> The text is corrupt in a number of instances and several scholars have suggested different emendations. Dillon’s summary of *De ira* seems to rely on the most recent edition of the text prepared by F. H. Sandbach. The following passage is of crucial importance to his interpretation:<sup>732</sup>

οὐ μὴν ἄλλ’ ἐπιμελείας εἰς αὐτὰ δεῖ καὶ μελέτης <ῆ> καὶ μάλιστα ἀλίσκονται κατ’ ἄκρας-  
<κατορβοῦσι δὲ μάλιστα> οἱ παραδεξάμενοι τὸν θυμὸν ὡς σύμμαχον ἀρετῆς, ἀπολαύοντες ὅσον  
αὐτοῦ χρήσιμόν ἐστιν ἐν τε πολέμῳ καὶ νῇ Δί’ ἐν πολιτείαις.

Not that success can be had without pains and training; otherwise men meet with utter disaster. Those men do best who accept anger as virtue’s ally, making use of it in so far as it is helpful in war and indeed in politics (trans. F. H. Sandbach).

As Geert Roskam has pointed out, Sandbach’s emendations are hardly necessary.<sup>733</sup> In this particular instance, the text makes good sense as it stands. In what follows, I reproduce the same passage as it is printed in the edition by G. N. Bernardakis, who did justice to the text of the manuscripts.<sup>734</sup>

<sup>726</sup> Harris 2001, 119; cf. Tsouna 2011, 206.

<sup>727</sup> Plutarch cites a saying by Plato that is not attested by any other ancient author: “Is it possible that I am like them?” See also *Rect. rat. aud.* 40d; *Inim. util.* 88e; *Tu. san.* 129d.

<sup>728</sup> Cf. van Hoof 2005, 502.

<sup>729</sup> Betz and Dillon 1978, 171.

<sup>730</sup> Dillon 1996, 189.

<sup>731</sup> See Roskam 2003, 60–2.

<sup>732</sup> See Sandbach 1967, 91.

<sup>733</sup> Roskam 2003, 48–50.

<sup>734</sup> See Bernardakis 1888–1896, 7:138–9.

οὐ μὴν ἄλλ' ἐπιμελείας εἰς αὐτὰ δεῖ καὶ μελέτης. ἥ καὶ μάλιστα ἀλίσκονται κατ' ἄκρας οἱ παραδεξάμενοι τὸν θυμὸν ὡς σύμμαχον ἀρετῆς, ἀπολαύοντες ὅσον αὐτοῦ χρήσιμόν ἐστιν ἐν τε πολέμῳ καὶ νῇ Δί' ἐν πολιτείαις.

But in any case, there is need of attention and practice. And for that reason, those men are utterly ruined who admit temper as ally of virtue, taking advantage of it to the extent that it is useful in war and, by Zeus, in politics (trans. G. Roskam).

It is, therefore, clear that what Plutarch says in this passage is the exact opposite of what Dillon claims he says. No one, according to Plutarch, should seek to make anger virtue's ally; otherwise, he or she would be utterly ruined. There seems to be no disagreement between the outlook of *De ira* and that of *De cohibenda ira*.

One could, however, argue that Plutarch was not quite consistent in his psychology. Indeed, there seems to be some contradiction between the works where he argues for the eradication of anger (*De cohibenda ira* and *De ira*) and the works that deal with the tripartite nature of the soul, where he speaks positively of the spirited part of the soul (*De virtute morali* and *Platonicae quaestiones*). In *De virtute morali*, he says that the spirited part of the soul sometimes sides with the appetitive part and sometimes “lends strength and vigour to reason” (442a; trans. W. C. Helmbold). It is worth noting, however, that the very next sentence demonstrates that “in fact Plutarch believes the spirited element is more closely related to the appetitive, for he emphasizes the opposition between the two irrational parts, on the one hand, and reason, on the other.”<sup>735</sup>

In much the same way, his work *Platonicae quaestiones* claims that it is natural (κατὰ φύσιν) for the spirited part of the soul to obey reason and punish the appetitive part whenever it disobeys it (1008b). Even more, the spirited part is “for the most part” reason's ally (1008c). Yet, a little later (1008d–e), as Jan Opsomer points out, Plutarch “emphatically claims that the spirited is more closely related to the appetitive than to reason, pointing out that some philosophers even regard the spirited and the appetitive as identical, given their similarity.”<sup>736</sup>

Admittedly, despite all the reservations Plutarch makes, there is still a peculiar discrepancy between *De cohibenda ira* and *De ira*, on the one hand, and *De virtute morali* and *Platonicae quaestiones*, on the other. Roskam is perhaps on the right track, when he suggests that the difference “can perhaps to a certain extent be explained by the different perspective” of these works.<sup>737</sup> *De virtute morali* and *Platonicae quaestiones* are theoretical works, wherein Plutarch affirms his allegiance to Plato; *De cohibenda ira* and *De ira* are therapeutic works, where anger is treated as a terrible disease, and the reader is thus encouraged to become a physician of his own soul. In the latter context, Plutarch even dares to claim that Plato's views on anger are inaccurate.

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<sup>735</sup> Opsomer 2012, 321.

<sup>736</sup> Opsomer 2012, 329.

<sup>737</sup> Roskam 2003, 50.



### 10.9.3. Galen<sup>738</sup>

As I have pointed out above, Plutarch considered the eradication of anger to be an important component of assimilation to the divine. In what follows, I will show that Galen's views were in agreement with Plutarch's train of thought. What is important for the present discussion is that neither Galen nor Plutarch, though they both try to remain true to Plato, maintain the same level of positive appreciation of anger that we encounter in Plato's *Respublica*.

Galen's treatise *De moribus* offers the most detailed discussion of the assimilation to the divine.<sup>739</sup> This work was divided into four books and, according to Richard Walzer, was written between 185 and 192 CE.<sup>740</sup> Unfortunately, the Greek text of the treatise is lost.<sup>741</sup> The treatise was translated into Arabic in the ninth century CE by Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq.<sup>742</sup> This translation is also lost, though there are numerous quotations from it in Arabic,<sup>743</sup> as well as in Hebrew.<sup>744</sup> There is, however, an epitome of the translation that was published by Paul Kraus.<sup>745</sup>

According to Walzer,<sup>746</sup> the epitome of the second book preserves an interesting "protreptic chapter."<sup>747</sup> It is in this chapter that Galen offers a detailed account of assimilation to the divine. The chapter begins with a discussion of why we are given the lower parts of the tripartite soul.<sup>748</sup>

You must also realize that the body is joined to you only in order that you may use it as an instrument with which to do things, that the appetitive soul (*al-naḥs al-shahwāniyyah*) is planted in you only for the sake of the body and that you possess the spirited soul (*al-naḥs al-ghaḍabiyyah*) only in order that you may call upon it for help against the appetitive soul.

A commentary on Galen's terminology seems to be in order. According to the epitome of the first book of *De moribus*, there is no terminological difference between "soul" and "part of the soul":

I have explained this in the book that I wrote on *The Views of Hippocrates and Plato*, and I have shown there that man possesses something that is responsible for thought, something else that is responsible for anger and a third thing that is responsible for desire. It makes no difference how I refer to these three things in this book, whether as separate souls, as parts of the one human soul or as three different faculties of the same essence. I shall, in fact, in this

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<sup>738</sup> In what follows, I limit myself to Galen's philosophical works. For a discussion of anger in his medical works, see von Staden 2012, 72–87.

<sup>739</sup> It should be noted, however, that this concept is present in Galen's other works as well. For instance, in *Aff. dign.* 3.7 (5.11 Kühn), he argues that only the sage, ὁ σοφός, is completely free from fault, ἀναμάρτητος (i.e. free from passions, πάθη). In this respect, the sage is not human, and that is why, according to "the most ancient philosophers," "wisdom is becoming like God," ὁμολωσιν εἶναι θεῶ τὴν σοφίαν.

<sup>740</sup> Walzer 1962, 144.

<sup>741</sup> The Greek title of the treatise, Περὶ ἠθῶν, is mentioned twice in the Greek corpus of Galenic works, namely in *Libr. propr.* 12 (= 19.45 Kühn) and *Aff. dign.* 6.1 (= 5.27 Kühn).

<sup>742</sup> See Bergsträsser 1925, 49 (Arabic text), 40 (German translation); see also Bergsträsser 1932, 23, 25, 29 (corrections).

<sup>743</sup> See, e.g., Stern 1956, 97–101 (Arabic text), 91–7 (English translation).

<sup>744</sup> See Zonta 1995, 29–80.

<sup>745</sup> Kraus 1937, 25–51.

<sup>746</sup> Walzer 1962, 165.

<sup>747</sup> See Kraus 1937, 39–41; Mattock 1972, 248–9.

<sup>748</sup> The following quotations are taken from the English translation of *De moribus* by J. N. Mattock (occasionally, slightly altered). See Mattock 1972, 236–59.

book, call that which is responsible for thought “the rational soul” and “the cogitative soul,” whether it be a separate soul, a part or a faculty; I shall call that which is responsible for anger “the spirited soul” or “the animal soul” and that which is responsible for desire “the appetitive soul” or “the vegetative soul.”

Indeed, Galen discusses this issue at length in *Plac. Hipp. Plat.* 6.2 (5.514–9 Kühn = 499–506 Müller) and argues that “it would be correct to term the rational, the spirited and the appetitive both ‘forms’ (εἶδη) and ‘parts’ (μέρη) of the soul” (6.2.2 = 5.514 Kühn = 500 Müller; trans. P. de Lacy, slightly altered). In order to support his view, he quotes *Tim.* 77b (6.2.7 = 5.516 Kühn = 502 Müller), where the appetitive part is called “the third form of soul,” τὸ τρίτος ψυχῆς εἶδος.

Quite remarkably, the same terminology seems to be employed in another work of Galen’s translated by Hunayn, *Compendium Timaei Platonis*.<sup>749</sup> The Arabic terms used in this text are “the reasonable soul” (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*) and “the appetitive soul” (*al-nafs al-shahwāniyyah*). The latter term in *Compendium Timaei Platonis* corresponds to, e.g., τὸ τρίτος ψυχῆς εἶδος of *Tim.* 77b.<sup>750</sup>

It is certain, therefore, that, in this instance, the Arabic translation of *Compendium Timaei Platonis* and *De moribus* faithfully reproduces the wording of the lost Greek *Vorlagen*, i.e. ἡ λογιστικὴ ψυχὴ, ἡ θυμοειδὴς ψυχὴ, and ἡ ἐπιθυμητικὴ ψυχὴ. As we have seen, Galen used these terms as equivalents of Plato’s τὸ λογιστικόν, τὸ θυμοειδές, and τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν.

I now proceed to the content of the passage. Galen expresses the same idea, i.e. that the spirited part of the soul, τὸ θυμοειδές, can be used as an ally in the struggle against the appetitive part, τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν, in *Aff. dign.* 6.1 (5.27 Kühn). What is somewhat surprising, however, is that, in the same treatise, Galen lists anger, θυμός, among the soul’s passions (3.1 = 5.7 Kühn) and, like Philo and Plutarch, considers it to be a disease of the soul (νόσημα ψυχῆς) (5.5 = 5.24 Kühn). According to him, to be enslaved to anger means to cease being human:

Man alone, as compared with other things, has the special gift of reason; if he casts this gift aside and indulges his anger, he is living and acting like a wild animal rather than a man (5.3 = 5.23 Kühn; trans. P. W. Harkins).

Thus, Galen considers anger to be reason’s enemy, but, at the same time, claims that the spirited part of the soul can be an ally of the rational part. In order to avoid contradiction, he makes remarkable adjustments to the doctrine of the tripartite nature of the soul.

In *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*, he points out that anger, θυμός, and faint-heartedness, ἀθυμία, are a pair of extremes and that either of them has to be avoided, “for faint-heartedness is a deficiency in the motion of the spirited part, whereas the motion of anger is extreme and in excess of the proper amount” (6.1.15 = 5.509 Kühn = 494–5 Müller; trans. P. de Lacy). The ultimate source of

<sup>749</sup> This *Compendium* was part of Galen’s “Summary of Plato’s Dialogues” (Πλατωνικῶν διαλόγων σύνοψις) in eight books (*Libr. propr.* 13 = 19.46 Kühn). According to Hunayn’s report, he discovered a copy of this work containing four of the eight books. The first book contained epitomes of *Cratylus*, *Sophista*, *Politicus*, *Parmenides*, and *Euthydemus*; the second one, of the four books of *Respublica*; the third one, of *Timaeus* and of the other six books of *Respublica*; the fourth one, of the twelve books of *Leges*. See Walzer and Kraus 1951, 35–6 (Arabic text), 97–8 (Latin translation). The Greek original of Galen’s “Summary” is lost. Of the Arabic translation, only the epitome of *Timaeus* and few fragments of other epitomes are extant.

<sup>750</sup> See Walzer and Kraus 1951, 26 (Arabic text), 81 (Latin translation).

this notion is the Peripatetic tradition, though the Aristotelian pair of extremes is irascibility, ὀργιλότης, and inirascibility, ἀοργησία (*Eth. Nic.* 1108a).

Thus, Galen considers anger to be a passion, but, at the same time, speaks positively of the spirited part. Yet, as we read in *De moribus* a little further below, Galen's positive appreciation of the spirited part had its limitations:

Since you are a man only by virtue of your rational soul (*al-nafs al-nāṭiqah*), and you can remain alive and intelligent by virtue of this soul, without the appetitive and the spirited souls, and if the rational soul were freed from the other two it would not have an evil way of life, you should treat as of no account the actions and accidents of the other two. If, being freed from these two souls at the same time as you are freed from the body, you are able to be intelligent and understanding, as clever philosophers claim for man's state after death, you must know that your way of life after your release from the body will be like that of the angels (*al-malā'ikah*).

Undoubtedly, Galen did not speak of becoming like the angels in the Greek *Vorlage* of the Arabic translation. As Walzer pointed out, while the Arabic text reads “angels,” “gods” “was certainly to be read in the Greek original.”<sup>751</sup> This phenomenon is also attested in *Compendium Timaei Platonis*, where “the angels,” *al-malā'ikah*, correspond to “gods,” θεοί, of *Tim.* 41c, 42d, and 51e.<sup>752</sup> Thus, in this passage, Galen speaks of the assimilation to the divine. According to him, the assimilation to the divine implies the extirpation of the lower parts of the soul.

The conclusions that I was able to reach in this section are as follows. First, what Galen says about the lower parts of the soul in *De moribus* elaborates the ideas he expresses elsewhere: the spirited part can be the reasonable part's ally, but inasmuch as the imperfect, i.e. bodily, existence is concerned. Second, becoming like God, according to Galen, implies the extirpation of the lower parts of the soul, which comes quite close to Clement's train of thought.

#### 10.9.4. Clement

The modifications Clement introduced to Plato's division of the soul are quite similar to those we have encountered in the works of Plutarch and Galen. Clement agrees that the soul is tripartite, but clearly has a low regard for the spirited part:

The soul consists of three parts. The intelligence (τὸ νοερόν), which is also called the reason, is the inner man, the ruler of the external man. But it is led by someone else, that is, by God. The part in which anger resides (τὸ θυμικόν) is akin to the beasts and lives close to madness. The third part, desire (τὸ ἐπιθυμητικόν), takes many forms and is more changeable than Proteus the sea god, assuming a different form for every different occasion, seeking satisfaction in adultery, promiscuity, and seduction (*Paed.* 3.1.1.2; trans. S. P. Wood).

In the passage quoted above, Clement does not speak of any advantages of anger, but rather says that it is “akin to the beasts (θηριῶδες ὄν)” and “lives close to madness (πλησίον μανίας οἰκεῖ).”

<sup>751</sup> Walzer 1962, 166.

<sup>752</sup> See Walzer and Kraus 1951, 9, 11, and 14 (Arabic text), 50, 53, and 58 (Latin translation).

Elsewhere (*Strom.* 4.23.151.1), he says, “God is free from every passion, both from anger and desire (θεός δὲ ἀπαθής ἄθυμός τε καὶ ἀνεπιθύμητος).” A little later (*Strom.* 4.23.152.1), he points out that the same holds true for the Savior.<sup>753</sup> Finally, since freedom from anger and desire are divine, and since salvation, in Clement’s thought, is assimilation to God, one should rise above these passions in order to obtain perfection (*Strom.* 3.10.69.3–4; 3.13.93.2).

It seems clear that Galen and Clement are in fundamental agreement with respect to assimilation to the divine. The only conceptual difference between Galen and Clement is that, according to Galen’s *De moribus*, the extirpation of the lower parts of the soul takes place after the soul leaves the body.

#### 10.10. The Nag Hammadi Excerpt

Since anger, as it turns out, is in fact a passion and a disease, it follows that the role of the lion in Plato’s allegory has to be reconsidered. Clement never refers to Plato’s allegory of the soul,<sup>754</sup> but luckily there still is at least one source that bears witness to its transformation: the excerpt from Plato’s *Respublica* in the Nag Hammadi collection of texts (NHC VI 48.16–51.23).

This fragment seems to be of some significance for the understanding of *Thomas 7*. First, the excerpt contains the part of the dialogue that includes Socrates’ allegory of the soul (588a–589b). The fact that this text was read in certain early Christian circles indicates that, even if neither the author of *Thomas 7* nor his audience had read *Respublica* down to the last page, they might still have been well aware of the allegory.

Second, the excerpt gives us important evidence of the reception history of the allegory of the soul. It is clear that neither the Coptic translation of the excerpt nor its Greek *Vorlage*<sup>755</sup> had high regard for the lion. As Jackson rightly pointed out, “the excerpt breaks off precisely at the point where Plato is about to mention the lion for its beneficial function (‘making an ally of the lion’s nature’).”<sup>756</sup> It seems that whoever excerpted this passage from *Respublica* did not favor the idea that anger might be of use to anyone.

Jackson’s observation provides us with a better understanding of the intellectual context where *Thomas 7* was coined. Both the lion saying and the Greek *Vorlage* of the excerpt from *Respublica* reflect the same tendency in the reception history of Plato’s allegory of the soul. They both know that anger is a dangerous passion, and they both portray the lion as the inner man’s enemy.

<sup>753</sup> It is worth noting that the Savior, according to Clement, destroyed anger and desire at once, since anger is a form of desire, namely the desire for retribution (τιμωρίας ἐπιθυμία). Thus, Clement follows the Stoic definition of anger (quoted in section 10.7).

<sup>754</sup> Pace Schenke 1974, 238. Admittedly, *Strom.* 7.3.16.1–4, shares some of its terminology with *Resp.* 588c–589b (cf. Stählin 1936, lxvi). Clement talks about the Gnostic who takes care of himself (ἑαυτοῦ ἐπιμελόμενος) and becomes superior to the evil forces within in the same manner as he is superior to wild beasts (θηρία); should this Gnostic ever rule over other people, he will tame (ἐξημερώσεται) that which is savage (ἄγριον) and disobedient. Another passage that might seem reminiscent of Plato’s allegory of the soul is *Protr.* 1.4.1–4 (see section 10.11, below), where Clement says that Jesus tamed (ἐπιθάσεν) most savage beasts (ἀγριώτατα θηρία) and transformed them into civilized humans (ἄνθρωποι ἡμέροι). Yet the similarity with Plato is hardly striking, since, both here and elsewhere (see, e.g., *Strom.* 4.3.12.4; *Paed.* 1.13.102.1), Clement appears to be merely following a well-documented tradition of describing passions and pleasures, as well as people indulging in them, as θηρία, which must be tamed (see Malherbe 2014, 1:44–9). It does not seem necessary, therefore, to treat either *Strom.* 7.3.16.1–4, or for that matter *Protr.* 1.4.1–4, as an allusion to Plato’s allegory.

<sup>755</sup> There seems to be no reason to suspect that the Greek *Vorlage* of the excerpt was significantly different from the Greek text of *Respublica* that has come down to us. Most of the peculiar readings of the Coptic text are clearly due to the incompetence of the translator; cf. Schenke 1974, 239–41.

<sup>756</sup> Jackson 1985, 209.

## 10.11. The Meaning of *Thomas* 7

Having described the philosophical texts and ideas that form the most convincing context for *Thomas* 7, I now proceed to a discussion of the meaning of the saying. There is little doubt that *Thomas* 7 warns the readers against the destructive force of anger. Anger is a bestial force that constitutes a menace to human nature.

As I have already pointed out, the lion is an animal that ancient literature invariably associates with anger. More importantly, there is a first-hand testimonial of an ancient reader who clearly thought that the lion saying was about anger. I therefore turn to Didymus' exegesis.

Didymus' commentary on Ps 43:12 LXX is the only witness to the reception history of the lion saying.<sup>757</sup> In the section that deals with the expression πρόβατα βρώσεως ("sheep for eating"), Didymus remarks that "it is often said that the student becomes the food of the [teacher]" (λέγεται πολλάκις βρῶμα γίνεσθ[αι] ὁ μαθητῆς τοῦ [διδασκάλου]) (*Comm. Ps.* 315.23), referring to John 4:34 and 4:32.<sup>758</sup>

He then brings up the lion saying and shows that it also addresses the issues of student-teacher relations (*Comm. Ps.* 315.27–316.4; for the Greek text and its translation, see section 10.1). What is crucial for the present discussion is that Didymus connects the man and the lion of the saying with ἄνθρωπος λογικός and ἄνθρωπος ὠμόθυμος, respectively. As Dieter Lührmann puts it, "auf die Erziehung angewandt findet sich auch hier die auf Platon, *Politeia* 9 (588B–589B), zurückgehende Anthropologie des Gegensatzes von λόγος und θυμός."<sup>759</sup> According to Didymus, the lion saying portrays the constant struggle between reason and anger, the latter being tightly bound to savageness and ignorance.

Didymus' exegesis of the lion saying resonates with Clement's portrayal of Jesus Christ as a cultural hero. Clement compares Jesus with the legendary Greek minstrels, Amphion, Arion, and Orpheus. While the latter were possessed by demons, the former brought an end to demonic tyranny (*Protr.* 1.3.1–2). It was Jesus the minstrel who civilized mankind:

He at least is the only one who ever tamed the most intractable of all wild beasts—man: for he tamed birds, that is, flighty men; reptiles, that is, crafty men; lions, that is, irascible men (οἱ θυμικοί); swine, that is, pleasure-loving men; wolves, that is, rapacious men (*Protr.* 1.4.1; trans. G. W. Butterworth, altered).

A little later, Clement says that, with his heavenly song, Jesus transformed "all these most savage beasts" "into civilized humans" (1.4.3) and "made humans out of beasts" (1.4.4). It is worth noting that, when Clement describes Jesus as a cultural hero who tamed savage and uncivilized humans, he repeats a τόπος that is well-attested in ancient literature. The most striking parallel is the following passage from Horace's *Ars poetica*.<sup>760</sup>

<sup>757</sup> It should be pointed out that it is not clear whether Didymus knew the lion saying from a version of *Thomas* or from some other source.

<sup>758</sup> It is worth noting that the quotation from John 4:34 reads ἵνα τις ποιήσῃ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου instead of ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με. Didymus clearly adapts the text of John 4:34 for his purposes. Cf. Ehrman 1986, 136.

<sup>759</sup> Lührmann 1990, 316; cf. Lührmann 2004, 166.

<sup>760</sup> See also Cicero, *Inv.* 1.2–3 and the passages discussed in Solmsen 1932, 151–4.

While men still roamed the woods, Orpheus, the priest and prophet of the gods, made them shrink from bloodshed and brutal living; hence the fable that he tamed ravening tigers and lions (Horace, *Ars* 391–3; trans. H. R. Fairclough, altered).

Irascible men are, in Clement's thought, similar to lions. According to this simile, the lion that is tamed by a man and becomes man is an irascible person who becomes a rational person under the influence of another rational person. Didymus alters the simile slightly by replacing the taming of the lion with its consumption. He also mentions the possibility of a downward path: a man eaten by a lion becomes a lion, or, to put it plainly, a rational person can become an irascible person under the influence of another irascible person.

It should be noted, however, that Didymus' exegesis of the lion saying is not to be seen as the only viable interpretative option. It is possible that the lion in the saying stands for anger itself, as it does in Plato's allegory of the soul.

The fact that a Thomasine saying presupposes knowledge of a Plato's dialogue should not come as a surprise, since, as I argue in other chapters, quite a few Thomasine sayings allude to or rely on the Platonist tradition. Of course, the erudition of the individuals that authored *Thomas* is miles behind that of refined Christian intellectuals like Clement. Yet the fact that the excerpt from Plato's *Respublica* was included in NHC VI proves that Plato's allegory was of some interest to all kinds of early Christian groups.

I therefore suggest that the author of the lion saying knew Plato's allegory of the soul and assumed that his audience was also aware of it. What is remarkable about the lion saying is that its author was confident that anger was a vice, contrary to what Plato thought. Moreover, the author of the saying considered anger a particularly serious threat for his audience. He therefore reformulated Plato's allegory in order to adjust it to his views on anger. According to Plato, the creatures that live inside the composite man might hate and try to devour each other. According to the author of *Thomas* 7, however, it is, in fact, the only option. The inner man and the lion cannot be at peace; the inner life of every human is a constant struggle. It is wonderful when the inner man eats the lion, tragic when the lion eats the inner man.

The views of *Thomas* 7 on anger are exactly the same as the views we encounter in Seneca's treatise on anger:

Is anger in accordance with nature? The answer will be clear, if we turn our eyes upon man. What is milder than man, when he is in his right mind? But what is crueller than anger? What is more loving of others than man is? What more adverse than anger? Man was begotten for mutual assistance, anger for mutual destruction. The one would flock together with his fellows, the other would break away. The one seeks to help, the other to harm; the one would succour even those unknown to him, the other would fly at even those who are dearest. Man will go so far as to sacrifice himself for the good of another; anger will plunge into danger, if it can draw the other down (Seneca, *Ir.* 1.5.2; trans. J. M. Cooper and J. F. Procopé).

The only difference between Seneca and the author of the lion saying is that the latter expresses his views using and reshaping a well-known Plato's allegory. The lion of the saying is anger, a dangerous vice. The man that consumes the lion (*Thomas* 7:1a) and the man that is consumed by the lion

(*Thomas* 7:2a) are one and the same man, the inner man, i.e. reason, the true self, the divine element in the human being.

It seems reasonable to surmise, then, that the man the lion becomes (*Thomas* 7:1b) and the man who becomes the lion (*Thomas* 7:2b) are the inner man, too. In this case, *Thomas* 7:1, the beatitude, depicts the victory of the true self over anger. The result of the victory is the transformation of the inner lion into the inner man, which means that anger is absorbed by the true self and cannot cause any more damage. *Thomas* 7:2, the woe, describes the true self's defeat.

But this interpretation hardly exhausts the symbolic wealth of the saying. If we take *Thomas* 7:1b and *Thomas* 7:2b to refer *only* to the inner man, then we must admit that these verses simply repeat what has already been said in *Thomas* 7:1a and *Thomas* 7:2a: when the man eats the lion, the lion becomes the man; when the lion eats the man, the man becomes the lion. In other words, *Thomas* 7:1b and *Thomas* 7:2b state the obvious: the eaten becomes a part of the eater (cf. *Thomas* 11:3).

But if we read the saying with Plato's allegory in the background, we may take *Thomas* 7:1b and *Thomas* 7:2b to refer also to the composite man. In this case, the saying acquires a deeper meaning; the point of *Thomas* 7:1b and *Thomas* 7:2b would thus be that the outcome of the struggle between anger and reason affects the whole human being. The fate of the inner man determines the fate of the composite one.

There might be different answers to the question of what sort of transformation the author means by becoming a man and becoming a lion.<sup>761</sup> One option is to suggest that the lion saying presupposes the doctrine of reincarnation. According to Plato, "the walking and beast-like race" (τὸ πεζὸν καὶ θηριῶδες sc. φύλον), i.e. wild terrestrial animals, came from men who "followed the lead of the parts of the soul that reside in the chest" (*Tim.* 91e; trans. D. J. Zeyl). Since anger resides in the chest, it is quite natural for a wrathful person to be reincarnated into a lion. The transformation of an animal into a human is also possible (*Phaedr.* 249b; *Resp.* 620d), though Plato never elaborated upon this issue.<sup>762</sup>

It is more probable, however, that the lion saying gives an account of what Ismo Dunderberg calls "realized reincarnation."<sup>763</sup> The core message is that some humans are merely animals in human form. This doctrine is spelled out in the Gospel of Philip: "there are many animals in the world which are in human form," but the disciple of God will not be deceived by the bodily forms, because he will see the condition of each soul (NHC II 81.1–8; trans. W. W. Isenberg). In a similar fashion, the Authoritative Discourse makes the following remark with regard to the embodied soul:

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<sup>761</sup> As Marvin W. Meyer pointed out in his review of Jackson's book, the lion saying fits the general context of *Thomas* as one of the many sayings dealing with anthropological transformation: "the lion becoming human in the *Gospel of Thomas* is paralleled by other similar statements of transformation (e.g., the two becoming one in logion 22, a person becoming Christ in logion 108, and the female becoming male in logion 114)." See *JBL* 107 (1988): 161.

<sup>762</sup> See also Apuleius' summary of *Resp.* 620a–d in the third book of his *De Platone et eius dogmate*: "But he (i.e. Plato) says that at some point the souls of the dead pass into the bodies of dumb animals and in turn the animals' souls are transfigured into the bodies of men" (8.23–4; trans. J. A. Stover).

<sup>763</sup> Dunderberg 2015, 26.

Having left knowledge behind, she fell into bestiality. For a senseless person exists in bestiality, not knowing what it is proper to say and what it is proper not to say (NHC VI 24.20–26; trans. G. W. MacRae).<sup>764</sup>

Thus, to turn into a man means to become human not only in appearance, but also in essence; to turn into a lion means to cease being human, to become an animal in human form. When anger, the inner lion, defeats the inner man, the composite man turns into a beast. When the inner man defeats the lion, the composite man becomes truly human.<sup>765</sup>

## 10.12. Conclusions

The original structure of the lion saying was chiasmic. Due to an error made by the Coptic translator of *Thomas*, its text became corrupt. Luckily, Didymus the Blind paraphrases the same saying in his commentary on Psalms. Comparison of the two versions of the sayings makes it clear that, initially, the last line of *Thomas 7* read “and the lion becomes the man.”

While some scholars have called *Thomas 7* “senseless words,” others have proposed several elegant interpretations of the saying. These interpretations fall into two groups, literal and metaphoric. Despite their elegance, the literal interpretations of Valantasis and Crislip are not compelling, since they disregard the fact that the consumption of lion meat was highly unusual in the ancient world.

The most insightful metaphoric interpretation of *Thomas 7* was offered by Jackson, who argued that the saying derives its imagery from Plato’s allegory of the soul. Unfortunately, Jackson did not fully realize the importance of the fact that the lion of the allegory represents anger. In fact, the association of lions with anger was a *locus communis* of the ancient world, which is evident *inter alia* from Didymus’ interpretation of the lion saying.

Although Plato maintained that the inner lion could be tamed and turned into the inner man’s ally, a great number of philosophers of the later age considered anger to be a vice. This shift is most strongly pronounced in the writings of the Stoics, but even their adversaries, the Middle Platonists, were no longer willing to see the positive side of anger. For instance, Plutarch, in his dialogue on the freedom from anger, goes as far as to say that Plato was wrong when he remarked that anger is “the sinews of the soul.” The same holds true for Clement, who clearly accepted the Platonist partition of the soul, yet had nothing good to say about anger. Another important witness to the same sentiment is the excerpt of *Respublica* in NHC VI that breaks off precisely when Socrates turns the discussion to the usefulness of anger.

Hence, it should come as no surprise that *Thomas*, a Platonizing text, opts for the eradication of anger. There seem to be several ways to interpret the lion saying. First, we can follow Didymus, who thought that the saying referred to the interaction between rational and irascible individuals. If a rational person transforms an irascible person into a rational person, it is a blessing. The other way around, it is a tragedy.

Another option is to interpret the saying in light of Plato’s allegory of the soul. In this case, *Thomas 7* refers to the struggle of anger and reason that takes place inside every individual. The point

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<sup>764</sup> See also Auth. Disc. NHC VI 33.4–9. A similar notion is attested in Corp. Herm. 10.24: if a soul is “clinging to the body, held down and smothered by it,” the mind leaves it behind, and the soul “acts like an animal without reason” (trans. B. P. Copenhaver). I am grateful to Christian H. Bull for this reference.

<sup>765</sup> Cf. Gilhus 2006, 203.



of the saying is that the outcome of this struggle affects the whole person: if the inner lion destroys the inner man, the composite man turns into a lion; if, on the other hand, the inner man prevails, the composite man becomes truly human.

According to the latter interpretation, *Thomas 7* employs the same *dramatis personae* as Plato does in his allegory, i.e. the inner lion, the inner man, and the composite man. The only exception is the beast. As I have tried to point out, the author of the saying, as well as his contemporaries, considered anger to be a passion, or even perhaps *the* passion, a passion *par excellence*. Since the beast was no longer different from the lion, it was omitted.

It is worth noting that the two interpretations of *Thomas 7* listed above are not mutually exclusive, but rather supplement each other. The lion saying is laconic and cryptic and was probably intentionally phrased this way in order to induce the reader to seek out its meaning. Yet the saying is not meaningless, since its imagery is governed by distinct semantics. The message of the saying is, in fact, quite straightforward: being perfect means being free from anger.

This message certainly coheres with the rest of *Thomas*. As I have pointed out in chapter 7, a number of Thomasine sayings describe human perfection as oneness, which brings *Thomas* close to Clement. Clement, in turn, was confident that oneness implies the elimination of anger. *Thomas* was certainly of the same mind.

Moreover, the idea of oneness has implications for social life. The unity of a group of individuals is as important as individual oneness. Several Thomasine sayings emphasize certain communal values, most importantly brotherly love (saying 25) and peace (saying 48).<sup>766</sup> Anger, on the other hand, is a threat to living in concord, since an irascible person might disturb the communal peace.<sup>767</sup> Freedom from anger is thus crucial for both individual and social oneness.

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<sup>766</sup> See also chapter 8, where I argue that *Thomas* seems to be in agreement with the Middle Platonists who postulated an intimate connection between peace and transcendental “standing.”

<sup>767</sup> Cf. *Leg.* 3.130 (quoted in section 10.9.1), where Philo associates freedom from anger with peace.

## Excursus VII. The Lion Symbol in Monasticism

The monastic sources from the fourth and fifth centuries CE occasionally mention the inner lion, which shows that the monks were familiar with the tradition about the inner lion. All the relevant passages cite or allude to a Biblical verse about lions and internalize it by interpreting the lion as an evil force inside a human being.

In his study, Jackson quotes an apophthegm ascribed to Abba Poemen as an indication that “leonine symbolism continued to have great appeal in monastic circles in Egypt.”<sup>768</sup> In this apophthegm, Abba Poemen alludes to David’s fights with bears and lions in 1 Sam 17:34–7:

He also said, “David, when he was fighting with the lion, seized it by the throat and killed it immediately. If we take ourselves by the throat and by the belly, with the help of God, we shall overcome the invisible lion” (*Ap. part.*, collectio alphabetica, Περὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Ποιμένου, ροη’ = PG 65.365, #178; trans. B. Ward).

According to Jackson, the invisible lion in this saying represents “the roaring, ravenous appetites of the flesh.”<sup>769</sup> It is indeed likely, since the lion in the apophthegm is associated with the belly (ἡ κοιλία). Yet there is another saying ascribed to Abba Poemen that also deals with 1 Sam 17:34–7. Here, the lion is explicitly associated with anger:

A brother asked Abba Poemen, “What shall I do, for fornication (ἡ πορνεία) and anger (ὁ θυμός) war against me?” The old man said, “In this connection David said: ‘I smote the lion and I killed the bear’; that is to say: ‘I cut off anger and I crushed fornication with hard labour’” (*Ap. part.*, collectio alphabetica, Περὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Ποιμένου, ριε’ = PG 65.352, #115; trans. B. Ward, altered).<sup>770</sup>

According to Abba Poemen, the lion and the bear David struggled with are anger and fornication, respectively. Therefore, the association of anger with the lion is present in monastic tradition as well.<sup>771</sup> It seems that Shenoute also employed leonine symbolism this way. In his *Canon* 4,<sup>772</sup> the abbot compares the thoughts of sinners to lions:

Like a city whose officials<sup>773</sup> are like roaring lions in its midst, according to the Scriptures (Zeph 3:3), and in which the poor and the needy are oppressed, as it is written (Ezek 22:29), thus also are impudent people (γενρωμε ἡναγωῖτῃμε) whose thoughts and counsels (νεγμεεγε ἡνῃ νεγωοχμε) are like roaring lions in them. Through these (i.e. their thoughts and counsels), in their self-exaltation (τεγμῆτχασιγнт) over those who teach them, they oppress them in their

<sup>768</sup> Jackson 1985, 182–3.

<sup>769</sup> Jackson 1985, 183.

<sup>770</sup> The saying is also present in the collectio systematica; see Guy 1993, 250 (#5.11).

<sup>771</sup> Cf. Jackson 1985, 202.

<sup>772</sup> See Emmel 2004, 2:573–5.

<sup>773</sup> Note the misprint in the *editio princeps* (Leipoldt and Crum 1906–1913, 3:163, 25), where MONB.GI 127 col. i, ll. 3–4 reads  $\mu\epsilon\mu\epsilon\sigma\gamma\eta\gamma\mu\epsilon\mu\epsilon\sigma$  instead of  $\epsilon\mu\epsilon\mu\epsilon\sigma\gamma\eta\gamma\mu\epsilon\mu\epsilon\sigma$ .

disobedience (ⲧⲉϥⲙⲏⲧⲁⲧⲥⲱⲧⲏ), like the poor and the needy (MONB.GI 127 col. i, ll. 3–26<sup>774</sup> = MONB.BZ 235 col. i, l. 14–col. ii, l. 26<sup>775</sup>).

In this passage, the lion is not explicitly connected with anger, yet the way Shenoute expresses himself seems to be reminiscent of the symbolic representation of anger as the inner lion. According to Shenoute, some people's thoughts make the same people imprudent, arrogant, and rebellious; these thoughts are like roaring lions inside these people. Even though imprudence, arrogance, and rebellion are different from anger, all these qualities are nevertheless quite concordant with it. The lion by no means stands here for human passions in general; leonine symbolism is still connected with a particular set of emotions.<sup>776</sup>

As this concise overview shows, the lion continued to serve as a metaphor of anger in the literature of late antiquity. Egyptian monastic writings were familiar with the association of anger with lions. This shows that *Thomas 7* was a part of a metaphorical tradition that was well-known in Plato's age and survived to early monastic times.

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<sup>774</sup> See Elanskaya 1994, 261 and pl. cv.

<sup>775</sup> See Young 1993, 77–8 and pl. 24.

<sup>776</sup> It is also worth noting that this passage from Shenoute, just like the passage from Didymus discussed above, seems germane to student-teacher relations: it is those who are disobedient to their teachers that Shenoute compares to the lions.

## 11. Thomasine Metaphysics of the Image and Its Platonist Background

Chapters 5 and 6 of this dissertation reflected on the Thomasine outlook on the phenomenal realm. As I have pointed out, not only does *Thomas* share with the Middle Platonists a fundamentally negative attitude towards the human body, but also, unlike the Middle Platonists, projects this negative attitude onto the body of the world. In chapters 7 to 10, I discussed the Platonist impact on the Thomasine views on divinity, namely the notions of oneness, stability, immutability, indivisibility, and freedom from anger. As I have noted, these notions apply not only to ultimate reality, but also to human perfection, since the qualities of the ideal human often reflect the divine ones.

In this chapter, I discuss the notion of the image according to sayings 22, 50, 83, and 84. The Thomasine metaphysics of the image is, in a way, a territory where the phenomenal and the transcendent realms (discussed in the previous chapters) converge. On the one hand, the term for “image” in these sayings, *εἰκών*, is polysemantic and may be applied to both mundane and divine objects. On the other hand, the metaphysics of the image in *Thomas* is, as I will argue, an integral part of the Thomasine salvation history: it explains the present-day misery of our worldly existence and informs us about our future reunification with the godhead. In order to attain insight into the Thomasine metaphysics of the image, it is necessary to recognize its indebtedness to the Platonist tradition.

I have already touched upon the topic of Thomasine images in previous chapters: chapter 7 discusses the allusions to Genesis in *Thomas* 22:6, and chapter 8 analyzes the meaning of *τοῦτοικων* in *Thomas* 50:1. These findings, however, are insufficient for the reconstruction of the Thomasine metaphysics of the image, since saying 83, by far the most puzzling saying that deals with images, has been left out of the discussion. It is now time to fill this gap.

Thus, I begin this chapter with a discussion of the text of saying 83, its Platonist background, and its meaning. Then, I turn to other sayings that deal with images, i.e. *Thomas* 22, 50, and 84, and offer a reconstruction of the metaphysics that they presuppose.

### 11.1. The Text of *Thomas* 83

Bentley Layton’s edition and Thomas O. Lambdin’s English translation of the Coptic text present saying 83 as follows.<sup>777</sup>

83:1 πεχε ιϥ δε νρικων σεογονε εβολ ηπρωμε αγω πογοειν ετνηητογ qρηπ ρη θικων  
ηπογοειν ηπειωτ

83:2 qηαδωλπ εβολ αγω τεφρικων ρηπ εβολ ριτη πεφογοειν

83:1 Jesus said, “The images are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the father.

83:2 He will become manifest, but his image will remain concealed by his light.”

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<sup>777</sup> The versification follows Kloppenborg et al. 1990, 148–9.

The meaning of this text is obscure. As Peter Nagel puts it, saying 83 “ist ebenso tiefgründig wie unverständlich.”<sup>778</sup> Scholars who have made an attempt to ascertain the meaning of the saying have faced insurmountable difficulties. Perhaps the most remarkable attempt to make sense of the Coptic text as it stands was made by April D. DeConick. According to her, the visible images described in *Thomas* 83:1 correspond to our material bodies, while the image that conceals their light corresponds to God’s glory, the קבֿוד of Jewish mysticism, “surrounded by radiant light.”<sup>779</sup> Thus, *Thomas* 83:1 maintains that “the human’s image or body is visible while the light within the human body is hidden in the light enveloping God’s body or קבֿוד.”<sup>780</sup> *Thomas* 83:2, according to DeConick, deals with the mystic who will see God’s קבֿוד “hidden by a screen of light.”<sup>781</sup>

Despite its ingenuity, DeConick’s exegesis of saying 83 has a serious weakness. She interprets the text of *Thomas* 83:1 as if it read “the light of the image of father.” *Thomas* 83:1 in fact deals with the image of the light, not with the image of God (= God’s קבֿוד, according to DeConick). The light concealed within human beings is hidden in the image of God’s light, not in the light that emanates from God’s image. Thus, DeConick’s interpretation of saying 83 demonstrates how difficult the phrase “the image of the light of the father” is to interpret and how eager scholars are to gloss over it.

Indeed, the phrase  $\Theta\iota\kappa\omega\nu\ \eta\pi\alpha\rho\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu\ \eta\pi\alpha\iota\omega\tau$  appears to be overwhelmingly problematic and unparalleled in ancient sources. It is tempting, therefore, to approach the saying from a different perspective. It is likely that the solution to the problem is not exegetical, but text-critical. In other words, it is possible that the text is incomprehensible, because it is corrupt. I subscribe to the opinion expressed by the Berliner Arbeitskreis that the preposition  $\eta$ - before  $\pi\alpha\rho\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu$  is a scribal error.<sup>782</sup> The English translation of the emended text is as follows:

83:1 Jesus said, “The images are manifest to man and the light in them is concealed in the image.

83:2 The light of the father will become manifest and his image will be concealed by his light.”<sup>783</sup>

There are two reasons why this emendation should be accepted. One has to do with the structure of the saying, the other with its content. First, the emended text boasts a much more refined form. While the text of the saying as preserved by NHC II has no parallelism, the emended text has an elaborate chiastic structure: image – light – image / light – image – light:

83:1	the <b>images</b> are manifest; the <b>light</b> is concealed in the <b>image</b>	A – B – A
83:2	the <b>light</b> will be manifest; the <b>image</b> will be concealed by the <b>light</b>	B – A – B

<sup>778</sup> Nagel 2004, 251.

<sup>779</sup> DeConick 1996, 102.

<sup>780</sup> DeConick 1996, 115.

<sup>781</sup> DeConick 2007, 248.

<sup>782</sup> See Bethge 1998, 48–9.

<sup>783</sup> The conjunction  $\alpha\gamma\omega$  in *Thomas* 83:1 and *Thomas* 83:2 seems to render a “consecutive”  $\kappa\alpha\iota$ , not an “adversative” one; see Blass, Debrunner, and Rehkopf 1990, 367 (§442, 1–2).

It does not seem probable that a saying that originally had no parallel structure would attain such a structure by omitting a single letter; it is much more likely that the original structure of the saying was chiasmic and that, at some point, a Coptic copyist made a mistake that distorted the parallel structure.<sup>784</sup>

What makes it even more likely that the original structure of saying 83 was chiasmic is the fact that *Thomas* clearly has a soft spot for this literary device. There are at least eight other instances of chiasmically structured Thomasine sayings: *Thomas* 4:2,<sup>785</sup> *Thomas* 5,<sup>786</sup> *Thomas* 7,<sup>787</sup> *Thomas* 24:3,<sup>788</sup> *Thomas* 36:1,<sup>789</sup> *Thomas* 43:3, *Thomas* 56 and 80 (a doublet),<sup>790</sup> and *Thomas* 112.<sup>791</sup>

4:2a	the <b>first</b> will be <b>last</b>	A – B
4:2b	the <b>last</b> will be <b>first</b>	B – A
5:1	come to know the <b>manifest</b> and you will know the <b>hidden</b>	B – A
5:2	for there is nothing <b>hidden</b> which will not become <b>manifest</b>	A – B
7:1a	the <b>lion</b> is eaten by the <b>man</b>	A – B
7:1b	the <b>lion</b> becomes a <b>man</b>	A – B
7:2a	the <b>man</b> is eaten by the <b>lion</b>	B – A
7:2b	the <b>man</b> becomes a <b>lion</b>	B – A
24:3a	if <b>there is light</b> , then it <b>shines</b>	A – B
24:3b	if it <b>does not shine</b> , then <b>there is no light</b>	B' – A'
36:1a	worry not from <b>morning</b> to <b>evening</b>	A – B
36:1b	nor from <b>evening</b> to <b>morning</b>	B – A
43:3b	they love the <b>tree</b> ; they hate the <b>fruit</b>	A – B
43:3c	they love the <b>fruit</b> ; they hate the <b>tree</b>	B – A
56:1/80:1	he who has come to know the <b>world</b> has found a <b>corpse/body</b>	A – B
56:2/80:2	of him who has found a <b>corpse/body</b> , the <b>world</b> is not worthy	B – A
112:1	<b>flesh</b> depends upon the <b>soul</b>	A – B
112:2	the <b>soul</b> depends upon <b>flesh</b>	B – A

<sup>784</sup> For another instance of the copyist's mistake in the Coptic text of *Thomas*, see the discussion of the text of *Thomas* 6:4 in chapter 1.

<sup>785</sup> As I argue in chapter 7, the original wording of this saying is preserved in P.Oxy. 654; the omission of *Thomas* 4:2b in the Coptic text is secondary.

<sup>786</sup> As I argue in Excursus II, the original wording of this saying is preserved in the Coptic text; *Thomas* 5:3, attested by P.Oxy. 654, is a later addition.

<sup>787</sup> For a reconstruction of the original text of this saying, see chapter 10.

<sup>788</sup> For a discussion of this saying, see chapter 8.

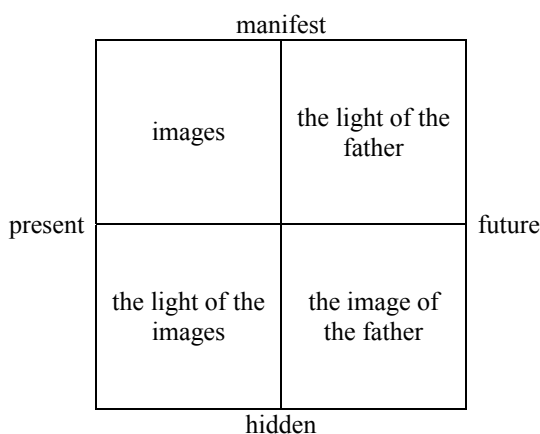
<sup>789</sup> *Thomas* 36:1 is attested in two textual witnesses, NHC II and P.Oxy. 655; the subsequent verses, *Thomas* 36:2–4, are attested only in P.Oxy. 655.

<sup>790</sup> For a discussion of these two sayings, see chapter 5.

<sup>791</sup> For a discussion of this saying, see chapter 6.

My second argument in support of the emendation suggested by the Berliner Arbeitskreis is concerned with the content of saying 83. As the following discussion of the background and meaning of the saying will demonstrate, the improved text clearly makes much more sense than the one attested by NHC II.<sup>792</sup>

It seems reasonable to make an inventory of the constituting elements of the saying before proceeding to a discussion of its background and meaning. *Thomas* 83 is a chiasm and thus comprises two opposing statements. The first statement deals with what is; the second, with what will be. The saying also opposes two types of images, the mundane with the divine. They differ with regard to their visibility: the divine images are hidden, the mundane images manifest. Moreover, there is an intimate relationship between images and light, and there is a principle that describes their relations: if the images are manifest, then the light is hidden, and vice versa. All these elements of the saying can be represented by the following diagram:



Thus, to offer a thorough exegesis of the saying, an interpreter would need to answer a long list of questions. What are these visible images? Why is there light in them? Why will the light of the father become manifest? What is the image of the father? How is it that it will be concealed by the light? I will give my answers to these questions as soon as I have discussed the Platonist background of the saying.

## 11.2. The Two Types of Images in Middle Platonism

It is quite remarkable that saying 83 contrasts the images that are visible and mundane with the images that are invisible and divine. The only intellectual tradition contemporary with *Thomas* that was aware of these two different types of images was Middle Platonism. It is thus very likely that Thomasine metaphysics of images is indebted to the Platonist tradition.

In this section, I discuss the Platonist background of *Thomas* 83. I argue that the notion of image in *Thomas* 83:1 comes from Plato's dialogues and that  $\eta\lambda\iota\kappa\omega\nu$  (\* $\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron\nu\epsilon\varsigma$ ) here are the objects present in the sensible world. I also argue that the notion of the image of the father (*Thomas* 83:2), to which

<sup>792</sup> Pace Popkes 2008, 419, who maintains that "this reading does not clarify the content matter of the text."

these mundane images are contrasted, can be traced back to Middle Platonist speculations about paradigmatic images.

### 11.2.1. The Mundane Images

As Friedrich-Wilhelm Eltester puts it, “Plato kann die Ideen als Vorbilder (παραδείγματα) für die Sinnendinge auffassen, die ihrerseits εἰκόνες der Ideen darstellen.”<sup>793</sup> It is certainly true that Plato in his dialogues often maintains that all sensible, or mundane,<sup>794</sup> objects are “images” (εἰκόνες) of the forms (εἶδη) which serve as their models (παραδείγματα).<sup>795</sup> It would not, however, do justice to Plato to reduce the opposition of an image with its model to the relationship between the sensible and noetic realms, since, as we will see, it is possible for a sensible object to be an image of another sensible object. Thus, it would be perhaps more accurate to argue that εἰκών is one of the terms Plato applies to sensible objects in order emphasize the fact that they are not independent and, therefore, do not truly exist. In what follows, I would like to list the main features of Plato’s understanding of εἰκών:

- The one who makes εἰκόνες is the craftsman (ὁ δημιουργός). In order to create an εἰκών, craftsmen have to look (βλέπειν) at a model. If a craftsman looks at something changeless (τὸ κατὰ ταῦτα ἔχον αἰεί), the εἰκών will be beautiful, but if he looks at something that came into being (γεγονός), it will not be (*Tim.* 28a–b).
- Images differ with regard to their faithfulness to their models. For instance, when Socrates discusses names as εἰκόνες created by a “craftsman of names” (ὁ δημιουργὸς ὀνομάτων), he notes that if this craftsman imitates (ἀπομιμεῖσθαι) the essence of things (ἡ οὐσία τῶν πραγμάτων) correctly, that εἰκών will be beautiful. If he fails to do so, it will not be. Accordingly, some names are fashioned beautifully (καλῶς) and some crudely (κακῶς) (*Crat.* 431c–e).
- Everything we encounter in this world is an image. Even time is a moving εἰκών of eternity (*Tim.* 37d). Moreover, the world itself is an image produced by its craftsman according to the eternal model (*Tim.* 29a–b; cf. 39e). As a perceptible god (θεὸς αἰσθητός), it is the image of the intelligible living creature, εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ (sc. ζώου) (*Tim.* 92c).<sup>796</sup>

<sup>793</sup> Eltester 1958, 27.

<sup>794</sup> The term “mundane” appears to be more accurate than “sensible.” For instance, a just law would probably qualify as an image of justice, but it most certainly would not qualify as a sensible object.

<sup>795</sup> Sensible objects can also be called εἰδῶλα, “images,” μιμήματα, “imitations,” ὁμοιώματα, “likenesses,” and φαντάσματα, “apparitions.” On Plato’s image terminology, see Patterson 1984, 30–1. It is worth noting that, as Cornford 1935, 198, points out, “Plato is never rigid in his use of terms.” Thus, although the terms εἰκών and εἰδῶλον are often used interchangeably, in *Soph.* 235b–236c, Plato makes an exception. Here, he distinguishes between two types of ἡ εἰδωλοποιικὴ τέχνη, “the art of making εἰδῶλα.” The first type is ἡ εἰκαστικὴ τέχνη, the art of making εἰκόνες. It is “the one we have when someone produces an imitation (μίμημα) by keeping to the proportions of length, breadth, and depth of his model (παράδειγμα), and also by keeping to the appropriate colors of its parts” (trans. N. P. White). The second type is ἡ φανταστικὴ τέχνη, the art of making φαντάσματα. It is the sort we have when someone distorts the proportions of his model. It is worth noting that this passage does not distinguish between a “good” and a “bad” type of imitation. Rather, the former type is, as Robinson 1953, 219, puts it, “at best, only less bad” than the latter. Thus, despite its peculiar terminology, this passage is as unfavorable to images as the ones I discuss below.

<sup>796</sup> The construction is explained in Taylor 1928, 648. Festugière 1936, 478, argued for “the image of the intelligible god,” εἰκὼν τοῦ νοητοῦ (sc. θεοῦ), which is less likely; cf. Cornford 1956, 359.



- Images are not duplicates of their models. An exact copy of Cratylus is another Cratylus, not an image of Cratylus (*Crat.* 432b–c).<sup>797</sup>
- Every εἰκὼν is always a transitory apparition of something else (*Tim.* 52c; see below). For this reason, εἰκόνες do not truly (ἀληθῶς) exist (*Soph.* 240b). Moreover, our discourses (οἱ λόγοι) about εἰκόνες are εἰκότες, i.e. not firm, but only probable (*Tim.* 29b–c).
- In this world, we occasionally encounter images of the objects that are dear to our souls, e.g. the images of justice (δικαιοσύνη) and temperance (σωφροσύνη), but these images have no splendor (φέγγος).<sup>798</sup> Yet some are able to see (θεᾶσθαι) in these εἰκόνες the nature of what they represent (τὸ τοῦ εἰκασθέντος γένος) (*Phaedr.* 250a–b).<sup>799</sup>
- Images are of no use to the soul that strives to reach the uppermost level of the intelligible reality (*Resp.* 510b; see below).

In what follows, I would like to offer a somewhat more detailed discussion of two of the passages mentioned in this bulleted survey of Plato’s metaphysics of εἰκὼν. First, *Tim.* 52c certainly deserves to be discussed at greater length. As Edward N. Lee points out, in this passage, “Plato enunciates the suddenly technical, doctrinally concise definition of the being of an image (εἰκὼν) as dependent both upon that ‘in which’ it occurs and that ‘of which’ it is an image.”<sup>800</sup> This passage belongs to the part of the dialogue wherein Timaeus explains the relation between the form, the image, and the receptacle:

Since even that with an eye to which an image came to be does not belong to the image (οὐδ’ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐφ’ ᾧ γέγονεν ἑαυτῆς ἐστίν), which is always a transitory apparition of something else (ἐτέρου δέ τινος αἰεὶ φέρεται φάντασμα), it stands to reason that the image should therefore come to be in something else (ἐν ἐτέρῳ προσήκει τινὶ γίγνεσθαι), somehow clinging to being, or else be nothing at all (*Tim.* 52c; trans. D. J. Zeyl, altered).

The expression τοῦτο ἐφ’ ᾧ γέγονεν is problematic and has thus received various interpretations.<sup>801</sup> In his very learned and detailed article on this expression, Harold Cherniss suggested that it should be translated as “that which an image signifies,” arguing that the point here is

that any particular image stands for something, refers to something, means something and that this meaning the image has not independently as its own but only in reference to something else, which is not dependent upon it but of which, as the parallel and complementary clause says, “it is always a transitory apparition.”<sup>802</sup>

<sup>797</sup> For an analysis of Plato’s train of thought in *Crat.* 432b–c, see Sedley 2003b, 137–8.

<sup>798</sup> Later (250c–e), Plato points out that beauty (κάλλος) holds an exceptional position and, as Patterson 1984, 28, puts it, provides us “with many distinct visual images.”

<sup>799</sup> Cf. de Vries 1969, 149.

<sup>800</sup> Lee 1966, 347.

<sup>801</sup> See Cherniss 1977, 364–75.

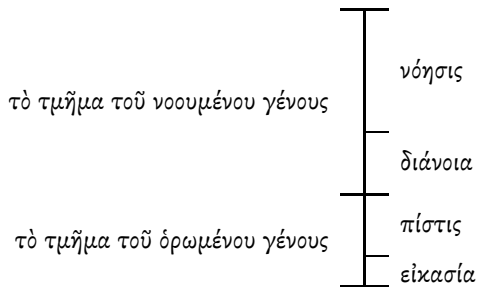
<sup>802</sup> Cherniss 1977, 374.

I am, however, inclined to side with Richard Patterson who called this interpretation into question, arguing that the passage is not about an image as a sign of its model, but rather about the “of-ness” of images,<sup>803</sup> or, as Lee put it, “the internal, continuing, essential relatedness” of an image to its model.<sup>804</sup>

From the fact that images are always *of* something else, Plato draws an inference that they must also be *in* something else.<sup>805</sup> As Richard Patterson puts it, the text stresses “a double dependence” of images, “dependence at once on the model *of* which it is an image and on the medium *in* which it must come to be if it is to be anything at all.”<sup>806</sup>

The second Platonic passage I would like to examine in this survey is the famous Simile of the Divided Line (*Resp.* 509d–511e). Indeed, a discussion of Plato’s εἰκόνες cannot do without mentioning it. According to James Adam, this simile contains “more Platonic teaching than any passage of equal length in Plato’s writings, and is of primary and fundamental importance for the interpretation of his philosophy.”<sup>807</sup> Scholarly publications offering various attempts to understand the simile are almost innumerable.<sup>808</sup> In what follows, I will not delve into a detailed interpretation of this passage, but rather focus on the significance and various types of εἰκόνες in it.

According to the simile, the two unequal sections of a divided line represent the intelligible and sensible realms. Each of these two sections, in turn, is unequally divided into two subsections, each of which represents a particular type of objects and corresponds to one of the four conditions (*παθήματα*) of the soul:



The first subsection of the lower part of the line consists of shadows (σκιαί), reflections (φαντάσματα), and other objects of this sort which Plato categorizes as images (εἰκόνες). The corresponding condition of the soul is εἰκασία, “conjecture,” i.e. grasping the nature of an object by means of its image.<sup>809</sup> The next subsection of the lower part of the line consists of that which εἰκόνες resemble, i.e. animals, plants, and artificial objects (τά τε περὶ ἡμᾶς ζῶα καὶ πᾶν τὸ φυτευτὸν καὶ τὸ σκευαστὸν ὅλον γένος). The corresponding condition of the soul is πίστις, “belief.”

<sup>803</sup> See Patterson 1984, 45–6.

<sup>804</sup> Lee 1966, 354.

<sup>805</sup> Cf. Taylor 1928, 348.

<sup>806</sup> Patterson 1984, 175.

<sup>807</sup> Adam 1963, 63.

<sup>808</sup> See, e.g., Adam 1963, 156–163; Ross 1951, 45–69; Wedberg 1955, 99–111; Austin 1979, 288–303.

<sup>809</sup> Cf. Robinson 1953, 190–1; see also Robinson’s comment on this issue in his review of Ross’ book in *The Philosophical Review* 61 (1952): 120.

The first subsection of the upper part of the line includes that aspect of the intelligible reality which is the object of geometry and related sciences. The corresponding condition of the soul is *διάνοια*, “thought.” In order to approach the objects of *διάνοια*, mathematicians use as their *εἰκόνες* the objects of *πίστις* (which, as we remember, have their own *εἰκόνες*, i.e. shadows and reflections). “These figures that they make and draw, which have shadows and images in water (*ὧν καὶ σκιαὶ καὶ ἐν ὕδασι εἰκόνες εἰσὶν*), they now in turn use as images (*ὥς εἰκόσιν*), in seeking to see those others themselves that one cannot see except by means of thought (*τῇ διανοίᾳ*)” (*Resp.* 510e–511a; trans. G. M. A. Grube and C. D. C. Reeve, altered).

Finally, the last and uppermost subsection of the line includes that aspect of the intelligible reality which is the object of dialectic and which is clearer and truer (*σαφέστερον*) than that of mathematics. The corresponding condition of the soul is *νόησις*, “understanding.” At this level, the soul operates without images (*ἄνευ τῶν εἰκόνων*) that were used at the level of *διάνοια*. It is completely detached from sensible objects and makes its investigation through forms alone (*αὐτοῖς εἶδеси δι’ αὐτῶν τὴν μέθοδον ποιουμένη*).

As Anders Wedberg puts it, “it seems that the relation of image to original is part of the very meaning of the relationship which the simile of the line asserts between the various classes of objects.”<sup>810</sup> It also seems that the four conditions of the soul are distinguished by different types of involvement with images. Conjecture operates with the images of the sensible objects, belief with sensible objects themselves; at the level of understanding, however, sensible objects reappear as images. It is only at the level of thought that the soul is by no means involved with images.

The two passages discussed above, *Tim.* 52c and *Resp.* 509d–511e, are crucial to understanding Plato’s *εἰκόνες*. His attitude towards them is hardly favorable. While the former passage emphasizes the transient nature of images and their lack of independence, the latter describes the ascent to ultimate reality as a gradual detachment from them. Richard Robinson goes as far as to describe the philosophy of Plato as the “condemnation of images”:

Plato’s whole theoretical philosophy is largely a condemnation of images and a struggle to get away from them. Man, he holds, has the misfortune to be so circumstanced that he inevitably begins life by taking shams for realities. The world revealed by the senses, which engrosses all of us at first, is only a half-real *image* of true being; and wisdom lies in the progressive substitution of the pure for the adulterated, looking forward to the day when “we shall know through ourselves all that is pure” (*Phd.* 67AB). In accordance with this view he urges us to abandon the senses and seek knowledge by the soul alone; his insistence that the best knowledge makes no use whatever of sensibles, even as images of the real, is itself a condemnation of images (e.g. *Rp.* 510–11).<sup>811</sup>

It comes as no surprise, then, that the Middle Platonists inherited Plato’s notion that all mundane objects are imitations and images (*εἰκόνες*) of their models. The following passage from Alcinous’ handbook illustrates the Middle Platonist use of this notion:<sup>812</sup>

<sup>810</sup> Wedberg 1955, 105.

<sup>811</sup> Robinson 1953, 220.

<sup>812</sup> This passage is strikingly similar to that of Arius Didymus, preserved in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.23.3–6, and Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.12.2a; see the synoptic table in Diels 1879, 447. The usual explanation for this similarity, viz. that Alcinous copied

Since of natural individual objects of sense-perception there must exist certain definite models (*παράδειγματα*), to wit the forms (*ιδέαι*), which serve as the objects of scientific knowledge and definition (for besides all (individual) men one possesses the concept of Man, and besides all (individual) horses that of Horse, and in general, beside all living things the ungenerated and indestructible form of Living Thing, just as from one seal there derive many impressions, and of one man myriads upon myriads of representations (*εἰκόνες*), the form being the cause and principle in virtue of which each thing is such as it itself is)—since, then, that is so, it is necessary that the most beautiful of constructions, the world, should have been fashioned by God looking to a form of World, that being the model of our world, which is only copied from it (*παράδειγμα ὑπάρχουσιν τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου ὡς ἂν ἀπεικονισμένου ἀπ’ ἐκείνης*), and it is by assimilation to it that it is fashioned by the creator (*Didasc.* 12.1; trans. J. Dillon).

In this passage, Alcinous employs two cognate words, *εἰκών* (“image”) and *ἀπεικονίζω* (“to represent in an image,” cf. *εἰκάζω* in 12.3). The first term designates images in the nontechnical sense, i.e. portraits and statues (cf. 9.1). Just as there may be many portraits and statues of one human being, so also may numerous sensible objects derive from a single form. The second term, however, is applied to the world; according to Alcinous, the world is an image of its model (cf. 12.3). By implication, all other sensible objects are also images of their models.

It is now possible to see the relevance of the Platonist metaphysical terminology for the understanding of saying 83. A natural conclusion a reader of Plato’s dialogues might have made would be that every object of the sensible world had a model and a craftsman and could thus have been called *εἰκών*. I believe that this is the conclusion the author of saying 83 made. The images that are visible to the human being are the objects present in the sensible world.

### 11.2.2. The Paradigmatic Images

Quite surprisingly, the term *εἰκών* received a new meaning in Middle Platonism. While in Plato, *εἰκών* serves as an equivalent of *μίμημα* (“imitation”), Middle Platonists sometimes use it as an equivalent of *παράδειγμα* (“model”). A model is an image in the sense that it serves as the “blueprint” of a mundane object. Hence, there are paradigmatic images in addition to Plato’s mundane ones.

Interestingly, this new usage of the term *εἰκών* made its way into several accounts of Plato’s teaching. One instance occurs in the summary of Platonic doctrine by Pseudo-Origen (*Ref.* 1.19).<sup>813</sup> According to this summary, there are three first principles (*ἀρχαί*), viz. God, matter, and the model.<sup>814</sup> In turn, the model is an intelligible image (*εἰκόνισμα*), which the demiurge reproduces in sensible objects:

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from Arius Didymus (see, e.g., Whittaker 1987, 93–4; Dillon 1993a, 115), has been convincingly refuted by Göransson 1995, 196–202; in all likelihood, Alcinous and Arius Didymus used the same source; cf. Dörrie and Baltes 1993, 237.

<sup>813</sup> Pseudo-Origen’s exposition of Plato’s doctrines is undoubtedly based on a Middle Platonist source; cf. Dillon 1996, 410–4.

<sup>814</sup> On this traditional Middle Platonist triad of first principles, see, e.g., Tobin 1985, 14–5. As Dörrie 1976, 342, puts it, “Die Drei-Prinzipien-Lehre, wonach Gott, Idee und Materie die Ursachen der Welt sind, ist der Kernsatz des Mittelplatonismus.” See also the list of references to the triad in Gersh 1986, 244–6. On *παράδειγμα* in the singular, see the discussion of Pseudo-Timaeus, below.

τὸ δὲ παράδειγμα τὴν διάνοιαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι· ὁ καὶ ἰδέαν καλεῖ, οἷον εἰκόνισμά τι, <ῶ> προσέχων ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐδημιούργει

The model is the thought of God; he (i.e. Plato) also calls it “form,” a kind of image which God looked at in his soul and created everything (*Ref.* 1.19.2).

Another instance of the term εἰκών with a Middle Platonist flavor is in Lucian’s *Vitarum auctio*, which gives an ironic exposition of Plato’s teaching. When a customer asks about the main point of his wisdom (τῆς σοφίας τὸ κεφάλαιον), Socrates gives the following answer:

αἱ ἰδέαι καὶ τὰ τῶν ὄντων παραδείγματα· ὅποσα γὰρ δὴ ὀρεῖς, τὴν γῆν, τὰπὶ γῆς, τὸν οὐρανόν, τὴν θάλατταν, ἀπάντων τούτων εἰκόνες ἀφανεῖς ἐστᾶσιν ἔξω τῶν ὄλων

The forms and the models of existing things; for of everything you see, the earth, the things on the earth, the sky, the sea, there are invisible images outside the universe (*Vit. auct.* 18).

In her commentary on this passage, Thérèse Beupère pointed out that, in his *Vitarum auctio*, Lucian was usually quite faithful to the terminology of the philosophers he was trying to ridicule. Yet the way the term εἰκόνες is used here is clearly inappropriate, since in Plato’s dialogues it is employed in the opposite sense. She concludes that Lucian speaks tongue in cheek: the models are pure abstractions and, therefore, “images” that do not truly exist.<sup>815</sup> As Jacques Bompaire puts it, this is “une plaisanterie désinvolte sur la théorie de Platon.”<sup>816</sup> This suggestion, however, becomes unnecessary if we presuppose that Lucian was familiar with the Middle Platonist use of the term. While the whole dialogue between Socrates and the customer is full of irony, it was probably intended to be seen as a relatively faithful account of Plato’s doctrines.

A third instance of such a use of the term is in Galen’s *Compendium Timaei Platonis* written ca. 180 CE,<sup>817</sup> one of the two extant Middle Platonist epitomes of Plato’s *Timaeus*.<sup>818</sup> Galen maintains that there are three causes of the world: first, effective cause, ‘illah fā’ ilah, i.e. the creator, *al-khāliq*; second, “the image (*al-timthāl*) according to which he (i.e. the creator) created it (i.e. the world)”;

<sup>815</sup> See Beupère 1967, 2:99–100.

<sup>816</sup> Bompaire 2008, 91.

<sup>817</sup> Walzer 1949, 16.

<sup>818</sup> A very short summary of *Timaeus* is also present in the recently discovered third book of Apuleius’ *De Platone et eius dogmate* (see Stover 2016, 130–5). It is also plausible that, in al-Fārābī’s *Falsafat Aflāḥun* (“The Philosophy of Plato”), the summary of Plato’s dialogues, including *Timaeus*, draws upon a lost Middle Platonist source (see Walzer and Rosenthal 1979, xii–xvi; Stover 2016, 183–97). On the other hand, *De natura mundi et animae* by Pseudo-Timaeus, is, as noted in Baltes 1972, 10, “keine Timaios epitome im eigentlichen Sinne.” All in all, there can be little doubt that, in antiquity, epitomes of this dialogue were, as put in Runia 1986, 55, “in plentiful supply.” For instance, we know from Simplicius that Aristotle wrote “a summary (σύνοψις) or abridgement (ἐπιτομή) of *Timaeus*” (*Comm. Cael.* 379.15–7 Heiberg; cf. 296, 16–8 Heiberg = Aristotle, fr. 206 Rose). This epitome might be identical to Aristotle’s “Excerpts from *Timaeus* and the Works of Archytas” (Τὰ ἐκ τοῦ Τιμαίου καὶ τῶν Ἀρχυτείων) in one book (Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. philos.* 5.25; cf. Moraux 1951, 106–7; Düring 1957, 47). In this case, Aristotle must have seen a connection between the doctrines of Plato’s *Timaeus* and those of Archytas, “doch wohl in der Richtung, daß Platon sich von Archytas habe anregen lassen” (Gigon 1987, 407).

and third, God's generosity, *jūd Allāh*.<sup>819</sup> As A. J. Festugière pointed out, this list of causes is identical to the one Proclus has in his commentary on the *Timaeus*; according to Proclus, Plato taught that the world had three causes, the demiurgic one (τὸ δημιουργικὸν αἷτιον), the paradigmatic one (τὸ παραδειγματικόν, sc. αἷτιον), and the final one (<τὸ> τελικόν, sc. αἷτιον) (*Comm. Tim.* 1.4.26–8 Diehl). Festugière also noted that this interpretation is in fact quite faithful to Plato's own account; one could easily deduce that the demiurgic cause is discussed in *Tim.* 28a–c; the paradigmatic one, in *Tim.* 28c–29d; and the final one, in *Tim.* 29d–30c.<sup>820</sup>

There is, however, an important detail that distinguishes Galen's account from that of Plato. Unlike Plato, Galen does not make any distinction between the model and its image.<sup>821</sup> In his view, the model is the image (there can be little doubt that *timthāl* corresponds to εἰκών of the lost Greek original), according to which the world was created. Galen is therefore one of those Middle Platonists who employed the concept of paradigmatic image.

While Galen, in his *Compendium*, mentions only the paradigmatic image, quite a few Middle Platonists employ the term εἰκών in both senses. One of the earliest texts aware of both the mundane images and the paradigmatic ones is *De natura mundi et animae*, a first-century BCE or first-century CE<sup>822</sup> pseudepigraphon written in Doric and ascribed to Timaeus of Locri.

Pseudo-Timaeus is familiar with Plato's use of the term. In *Nat. mund. an.* 30, he paraphrases *Tim.* 37d,<sup>823</sup> saying that time is the image of eternity. He goes on to say that time imitates its model, eternity, in the same fashion as the heaven (ὡρανός), i.e. the universe,<sup>824</sup> imitates its model, the ideal world (ὁ ἰδανικὸς κόσμος). This undoubtedly implies that the universe is also an image.

At the same time, Pseudo-Timaeus is one of the first authors to use the term εἰκών in the sense of "model." According to *Nat. mund. an.* 7, there are three first principles: God, "the craftsman of the better" (ὁ θεὸς δημιουργὸς τῷ βελτίονος), matter (ὕλη), and the form (ἰδέα). Interestingly, Pseudo-Timaeus always uses the terms ἰδέα and εἶδος in the singular. This peculiarity occurs in a number of sources, most importantly in Alcinoüs (*Didasc.* 9.1; 10.3; 12.3).<sup>825</sup> According to Dillon, "the adoption of this curious collective noun is presumably influenced by the presentation of the world of forms as a coherent whole."<sup>826</sup> In short, the term ἰδέα in Pseudo-Timaeus designates the sum total of the forms.<sup>827</sup> What is important for the present discussion is that this unified form is elsewhere referred to as εἰκών.<sup>828</sup> The following passage is a good illustration of this use of the term:

<sup>819</sup> See Walzer and Kraus 1951, 4–5 (Arabic text), 38–40 (Latin translation).

<sup>820</sup> See Festugière 1971, 495.

<sup>821</sup> Cf. Walzer and Kraus 1951, 39–40.

<sup>822</sup> For this date, see Tobin 1985, 3–7.

<sup>823</sup> This famous Platonic passage is also paraphrased by Plutarch and Apuleius (see below), Alcinoüs (*Didasc.* 14.6), and Diogenes Laertius in his summary of Plato's doctrines (*Vit. philos.* 3.73). It is also mentioned in *De placitis* (1.21.2; see Diels 1879, 318).

<sup>824</sup> Cf. Baltes 1972, 49.

<sup>825</sup> See also Plutarch, *Quaest. conv.* 720a–b; Pseudo-Origen, *Ref.* 1.19.2 (cited above); Plac. 1.3.21.

<sup>826</sup> Dillon 1993a, 93.

<sup>827</sup> Cf. Baltes 1972, 35; according to Tobin 1985, 16, the form in Pseudo-Timaeus becomes the intermediate figure between God and matter.

<sup>828</sup> Cf. Baltes 1972, 136.

After the establishment of the world, he (i.e. the demiurge) began to plan the generation of mortal living beings, so that the world would be made complete in every way in relationship to the image (ἡ εἰκών) (*Nat. mund. an.* 43; trans. T. H. Tobin).

Another important source for the Middle Platonist use of the term εἰκών is Plutarch. According to his *Plat. quaest.* 1007c–d, time and the world are two images of God (εἰκόνες τοῦ θεοῦ): time is the image of eternity (τῆς ἀιδιότητος, sc. εἰκών) in movement (ἐν κινήσει; cf. *Tim.* 37d), while the world is the image of being (τῆς οὐσίας, sc. εἰκών) and a god in becoming (ἐν γενέσει θεός; cf. *Tim.* 92c). A similar statement occurs in *Is. Os.* 372f, where Plutarch argues that “becoming is the image of being in matter and that which comes into being is the imitation of that which is (εἰκών γάρ ἐστιν οὐσίας ἐν ὕλῃ <ῆ> γένεσις καὶ μίμημα τοῦ ὄντος τὸ γινόμενον).”<sup>829</sup> Interestingly, the last notion is repeated almost verbatim by Numenius, who says that ἡ γένεσις is εἰκών καὶ μίμημα of ἡ οὐσία (fr. 16 des Places = Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 11.22.3).

At the same time, Plutarch is familiar with paradigmatic images. In *Quaestiones convivales*, Tyndares argues that, according to Plato, geometry draws us away from the sensible realm and turns us towards the intelligible one. This is why Plato opposed the geometricians, who use mechanical devices instead of reason.<sup>830</sup> because of that, geometry falls back on sensible objects and no longer lays hold of “the eternal and immaterial images in the presence of which God is always God (αἱ αἰδίδοι καὶ ἀσώματα εἰκόνες, πρὸς αἷσπερ ὧν ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ θεὸς ἐστὶν)” (718f; trans. E. L. Minar). Quite remarkably, the last part of this passage alludes to *Phaedrus*, where Socrates describes the forms as “those realities by being close to which the gods are divine (πρὸς οἷσπερ θεὸς ὧν θεοὶ ἐστὶν)” (249c; trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff).<sup>831</sup>

Apuleius was also aware of the distinction between εἰκών as μίμημα and εἰκών as παράδειγμα. The Latin term he employs is imago. In *Plat. Dogm.* 200–201, he paraphrases *Tim.* 37d, saying that “truly, time is an image of eternity, although time moves, while the nature of perpetuity is fixed and immovable” (tempus uero aevi esse imaginem, si quidem tempus mouetur, perennitatis fixa et inmotata natura est). A comparison of Plato’s text with Apuleius’ paraphrase leaves no doubt that Apuleius uses the Latin noun imago as an equivalent of Greek εἰκών.

Just like in Plato, “image” here refers to an imitation of a model, i.e. time is an imitation of eternity. Similarly, in his exposition of the doctrine of the two substances, the sensible and intelligible ones,<sup>832</sup> Apuleius claims that the former is “so to speak, a shadow and an image (ueluti umbra et imago)” of the latter (*Plat. Dogm.* 194). In other words, the sensible substance is an imitation of the intelligible one. There is one passage, however, where “image” is a synonym of “model”:

<sup>829</sup> The Greek text is from Bernardakis 1888–1896, 2:528, who accepted the emendation of Johann Jakob Reiske. Following the suggestion of Jeremiah Markland, most editions (Nachstädt, Sieveking, and Titchener 1971, 3:54; Griffiths 1970, 53; Froidefond 1988, 226) read <ῆ> ἐν ὕλῃ γένεσις. Paleographically, Reiske’s proposal is more plausible. It also makes better sense: according to Plato’s *Tim.* 52c, every image is of something and in something; it is this Platonic pattern that Plutarch follows both in *Platonicae quaestiones* (when he says that time is the image of eternity in movement, and the world is the image of being in becoming) and in *De Iside et Osiride* (when he says that becoming is the image of being in matter).

<sup>830</sup> For this (historically improbable) anecdote and its possible origins, see Riginos 1976, 145–6.

<sup>831</sup> Cf. Teodorsson 1989–1996, 3:167.

<sup>832</sup> I discuss this doctrine in chapter 9.

Ἰδέας uero, id est formas omnium, simplices et aeternas esse nec corporales tamen; esse autem ex his, quae deus sumpserit, exempla rerum quae sunt eruntue; nec posse amplius quam singularum specierum singulas imagines in exemplaribus inueniri gignentiumque omnium, ad instar cerae, formas et figurationes ex illa exemplorum inpressione signari.

Truly, *ιδέαι*, the forms of everything, are simple and eternal, but not corporeal. Those of them, which God chose, are models of the things that either are or will be. It is not possible to find in the models more than particular images of particular species. Forms and shapes of all things that come into being, just like those of wax, are marked by this impression of the models (*Plat. Dogm.* 192–193).

The last sentence of the cited passage provides us with an additional reason why models may be called “images.” Wax is molded by a seal; in a similar fashion, sensible objects of a certain species are molded by a model;<sup>833</sup> this model is, in turn, the image of this species. Just like impressions in clay or wax are all copies of a single image carved on a seal, so also all images, i.e. mundane objects, are likenesses or imitations of one image, their model. In other words, a model of an image is a paradigmatic image, an image of which other images are likenesses and imitations.

The last Middle Platonist that deserves to be mentioned in this survey is Theon of Smyrna. He is also familiar with the concept of paradigmatic image. According to him, the triad (ἡ τριάς) is the image (εἰκὼν), i.e. the model, of the plane (*Util. math.* 100.21–2 Hiller), while the tetrad (ἡ τετράς) is the image (εἰκὼν) of the solid (101.11 Hiller).

As the following passage demonstrates, Theon was also aware of the concept of the mundane image. In fact, the last sentence of this passage provides us with one of the most articulate and concise definitions of the relationship between the intelligible and sensible realms: τὰ αἰσθητά are the images of τὰ νοητά. Theon’s point is that nobody can be a philosopher without imitating the forms, that is, without making his life the image of the intelligible realm (the implicit premise of this argument is that like is known by like):

ἡ δὲ τῶν ιδεῶν γνώσις περὶ τὸν φιλόσοφον· οὐδὲ γὰρ εἰδείη τις ἂν τὸ κόσμιον καὶ σῶφρον καὶ εὐσχημον αὐτὸς ὢν ἀσχήμων καὶ ἀκόλαστος· τὸ δ’ ἐν βίῳ εὐσχημον καὶ εὐρυθμον καὶ εὐάρμοστον εἰκόνες τῆς ὄντως εὐσχημοσύνης καὶ εὐαρμοστίας καὶ εὐρυθμίας, τουτέστι τῶν νοητῶν καὶ ιδεῶν εἰκόνες τὰ αἰσθητά

Philosophers ought to seek the knowledge of the forms. Should one be indecent and incontinent, one would not be able to learn that which is well-ordered, reasonable, and noble. The things that are noble, well-proportioned, and harmonious in our life are the images of true nobility, harmony, and proportion. That is to say, the sensible objects are the images of the intelligible objects and forms (*Util. math.* 12.4–9 Hiller).

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<sup>833</sup> For other instances of models compared to seals, see, e.g., the passage from Alcinous quoted above (section 11.2.1) and the parallel material in Arius Didymus; cf. Philo, *Opif.* 129. This metaphor goes back to *Tim.* 50c.



It is now time to draw the conclusions. According to saying 83, there are two types of images: the mundane and the divine. The mundane ones are manifest, the divine ones, as we learn from *Thomas* 84:2 (see the discussion in section 11.6, below), are immortal and hidden. This contrast between the two types of images is very similar to the one attested in Platonism. According to several Middle Platonists, there are mundane images and there are paradigmatic ones. Sensible objects are transitory, because they are mere images of their eternal and intelligible models, yet these eternal and intelligible models are also often called images. Not only are these two different meanings of “image” attested in Middle Platonism; as we have seen, both types of images are often mentioned by the same author and even in the same text.<sup>834</sup> In view of this remarkable terminological similarity, it seems reasonable to suggest that both the phrasing and metaphysics of saying 83 are indebted to Middle Platonism.

### 11.3. Εἰκὼν θεοῦ as a Paradigmatic Image

There is, however, an important detail that deserves to be discussed at length, viz. that the paradigmatic image of *Thomas* 83:2 is the image of the father. Of course, certain reservations should be made here, since it is grammatically possible for *τετρακτων* in *Thomas* 83:2 to refer to *ποροειν* as opposed to *πειωτ*. Yet “the image of the light of the father” is quite an obscure expression; it was the incomprehensibility of this expression that forced scholars to emend the text in the first place.

“Father” is the regular name of the true deity in *Thomas*, and it seems quite natural to suggest that “the image of the father” refers to the Genesis narrative about the creation of the humankind *κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ* (Gen 1:26–7).<sup>835</sup> Hence, it is reasonable to surmise that *Thomas* belongs to the tradition of the Platonizing exegesis of Gen 1:26–7 and interprets *εἰκὼν θεοῦ* as a paradigmatic image, the model, of which humans are imitations. Notably, this interpretation is not unknown in Middle Platonism. In what follows, I discuss Philo and Clement, who were left out of section 11.2 precisely because of their metaphysics of *εἰκὼν θεοῦ*.

Let us start with Philo. Like the majority of Platonists discussed in section 11.2, he is familiar with the concept of mundane image. It is worth noting that, in addition to *εἰκὼν*, Philo uses the term *ἀπεικόνισμα*, yet there seems to be no terminological difference between these two words (see, e.g., *Her.* 231, where they are used interchangeably). In *Mos.* 2.127, he argues that the priest’s oracle (*τὸ λογεῖον*) is twofold (*διπλοῦν*) (cf. Exod 28:23–7), because *ὁ λόγος* is double (*διττός*) both in the universe and in human nature. In human nature, these two *λόγοι* are the indwelling reason (*ὁ ἐνδιάθετος*, sc. *λόγος*) and the uttered speech (*ὁ προφορικός*, sc. *λόγος*).<sup>836</sup> There are also two of them in the universe: first, there is the principle that deals with “the incorporeal and paradigmatic forms (*αἱ ἀσώματοι καὶ παραδειγματικαὶ ἰδέαι*), from which the intelligible world was framed.” Second, there is the principle that deals with “the visible objects (*τὰ ὁρατά*) which are the imitations and images (*μιμήματα καὶ ἀπεικονίσματα*) of those ideas and out of which this sensible world was produced”

<sup>834</sup> See the discussion of Pseudo-Timaeus, Plutarch, Apuleius, and Theon, above; see also the discussion Philo and Clement in section 11.3, below.

<sup>835</sup> It is worth noting that we have already encountered the expression *εἰκὼν θεοῦ* in section 11.2: according to Plutarch, time and the world are God’s images. This particular passage, however, is hardly relevant for the interpretation of *Thomas* 83:2, since both time and the world are mundane images and, therefore, belong to *νηκων* of *Thomas* 83:1.

<sup>836</sup> This distinction comes from Stoicism; see *S/F* 2.135.

(trans. F. H. Colson, altered). When Philo describes the creation of the visible world, he similarly describes it as an image and imitation of the intelligible one:

For God, being God, assumed that a beautiful copy (μίμημα) would never be produced apart from a beautiful pattern (παράδειγμα), and that no object of perception would be faultless which was not made in the likeness of an original discerned only by the intellect (οὐδέ τι τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀνυπαίτιον, ὃ μὴ πρὸς ἀρχέτυπον καὶ νοητὴν ἰδέαν ἀπεικονίσθη). So when He willed to create this visible world He first fully formed the intelligible world, in order that He might have the use of a pattern wholly God-like and incorporeal in producing the material world, as a later creation, the very image (ἀπεικόνισμα) of an earlier, to embrace in itself objects of perception of as many kinds as the other contained objects of intelligence (*Opif.* 16; trans. F. H. Colson).

This meaning of εἰκῶν is also attested in those Philonic works that are preserved only in Armenian. The Armenian word that corresponds to Greek εἰκῶν is Էրպարաւ. Admittedly, this Armenian word is polysemantic<sup>837</sup> and, according to the *New Dictionary of the Armenian Language*, might render various Greek nouns, e.g., μορφή, ἰδέα, εἶδος, σχῆμα, ὁμοίωμα, etc.<sup>838</sup> Yet, according to Ralph Marcus' *Index*, when it comes to Philo's *Quaestiones*, there seems to be one-to-one correspondence between Էրպարաւ of the Armenian translation and εἰκῶν of the Greek original, judging from the surviving Greek fragments.<sup>839</sup> Hence, there is no reason to doubt that in *QG* 4.115, Էրպարաւը renders εἰκόνες: "And the righteousness and truth among men are, to speak properly, likenesses and images (Էրպարաւը), while those with God are paradigmatic principles and types and ideas" (trans. R. Marcus).<sup>840</sup> Thus, just like the sensible world is the image of the intelligible one, so also is human righteousness in the image of the divine one.<sup>841</sup>

On the other hand, it is in Philo that the term εἰκῶν in the sense of "model" appears for the first time, though it is unlikely that it was Philo who introduced this new meaning.<sup>842</sup> The most remarkable example is *Somn.* 1.79, where he claims that we turn to sense-perception, "when we are no longer able to remain in company with holiest forms (αἱ ἱερῶταται ἰδέαι), which are as it were incorporeal images (εἰκόνες ἀσώματοι)" (trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker).<sup>843</sup>

In Philo's interpretation of εἰκῶν θεοῦ of Gen 1:27 these two meanings of εἰκῶν are brought together. According to Philo, and this is the point that he repeats again and again, the image of God

<sup>837</sup> See Bedrossian 1985, 343.

<sup>838</sup> See Awetik'eian, Siwrmēlean, and Awgorean 1836–1837, 1:1092.

<sup>839</sup> Marcus 1933, 268; see *QG* 2.62; 4.110 (not listed by Marcus); *QE* 2.66. Admittedly, in the Armenian translation of *De vita contemplativa*, Էրպարաւ translates σχῆμα (51) and εἶδωλον (72).

<sup>840</sup> There are two other passages in the Armenian *Quaestiones* where Էրպարաւը seems to render εἰκόνες in the sense of mundane images: *QG* 1.54, and *QE* 2.58.

<sup>841</sup> It is worth noting that the other meaning of εἰκῶν, that of the paradigmatic image, seems to be also attested in the Philonic works preserved only in Armenian: see *Anim.* 29 and 95, where, according to Terian 1981, 145 and 200, Էրպարաւը renders εἰκῶν.

<sup>842</sup> Cf. Theiler 1970, 499. Willms 1935, 29–30, and Baltes 1972, 21–22, assume that this meaning originated from the circle of Antiochus of Ascalon, an etiology which, as Tobin 1985, 25, notes, is by no means certain.

<sup>843</sup> According to Willms 1935, 76–7, Philo finds grounds for treating the terms ἰδέα and εἰκῶν as synonyms in Gen 5:3.

is his Logos.<sup>844</sup> This image of God is at the same time the model of all creation, including humanity. “Just like God is the model for the image (ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς παράδειγμα τῆς εἰκόνος),” argues Philo, “so also the image is the model for other things (οὕτως ἡ εἰκὼν ἄλλων γίνεται παράδειγμα).” Thus, Gen 1:27 is to be interpreted to the effect that “the image was modeled according to God (κατὰ τὸν θεὸν ἀπεικονισθεῖσα), while the human being was modeled according to the image (κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα), which had acquired the force of a model” (*Leg.* 3.96).

While the Pentateuch says that only the human being was created according to God’s image, Philo is confident that the same holds true for the sensible realm *in toto*. He gives reasons for this claim in *Opif.* 25. In this passage, as Gregory E. Sterling points out,<sup>845</sup> the Alexandrian offers an *argumentum a minore ad maius*: if humanity is a part of the world and was created according to God’s image, then the world was also created according to God’s image:

Now if the part is an image of an image (εἰκὼν εἰκόνος), it is manifest that the whole is so, too, and if this entire sense-perceptible world, which is greater than any human image, is a copy of the divine image (μίμημα θείας εἰκόνος), it is manifest that the archetypal seal, which we claim to be the intelligible world (νοητὸς κόσμος), would itself be the model (τὸ παράδειγμα), the archetypal form of the forms (ἀρχέτυπος ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν), the Logos of God (ὁ θεοῦ λόγος) (trans. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, altered).<sup>846</sup>

As Sterling puts it, “Philo has a three-tiered hierarchy: God, the Logos, and humanity.”<sup>847</sup> In this hierarchy, the Logos is the mediator and therefore plays a dual role: it is both an imitation and a model. Thus, when, in *Somn.* 2.45, Philo says that God sealed (ἐσφράγισε) the universe “with the image and form, i.e. with his Logos (εἰκόνι καὶ ἰδέᾳ, τῷ ἑαυτοῦ λόγῳ),” his point is that the Logos is both the image (= imitation) of God and the form (= model) of the universe.<sup>848</sup> This is also the reason why God is at the same time the model of the image (παράδειγμα τῆς εἰκόνος) (*Leg.* 3.96, quoted above) and the model of a model (παράδειγμα <παραδείγματος>) (*Somn.* 1.75).<sup>849</sup>

In *Her.* 230–1, Philo insists that it is crucial that, according to Gen 1:27, God did not make man his image, but rather after his image. The image is the Logos, and the man that was created according to the image is “the mind in each of us” (ὁ καθ’ ἕκαστον ἡμῶν νοῦς). There are, therefore, two types of reason (δύο λόγοι), the archetypal reason above us and its imitation within us. Philo concludes that the human mind is the impression of the image (τῆς εἰκόνος ἐκμαγεῖον),<sup>850</sup> and the cast that is two removes from the maker (τρίτος τύπος ἀπὸ τοῦ πεποιηκότος; cf. Plato, *Resp.* 597e; cf. also Clement, *Strom.* 7.3.16.6), while the Logos is the middle cast (ὁ μέσος, sc. τύπος) that is the model of the human mind and the image of God (παράδειγμα μὲν τούτου, ἀπεικόνισμα δὲ ἐκείνου).

<sup>844</sup> See, e.g., *Spec.* 1.81; *Somn.* 1.239; *Fug.* 101; *Conf.* 97; 147. It should be noted, however, that sometimes Philo offers alternative interpretations of εἰκὼν θεοῦ of Gen 1:27; see Sterling 2013, 47–56.

<sup>845</sup> See Sterling 2013, 45.

<sup>846</sup> The translation of this passage departs from Cohn’s text and follows the readings suggested in Runia 2001, 94.

<sup>847</sup> Sterling 2013, 45.

<sup>848</sup> Cf. Colson and Whitaker 1934, 607; Runia 1986, 163.

<sup>849</sup> This conjecture was suggested in Colson and Whitaker 1934, 336, and accepted by Sterling 2005, 132.

<sup>850</sup> Philo likens the paradigmatic image (= the Logos) to the seal, and the imitations of the image (= human minds) to the impressions of the seal. Cf. the discussion of this imagery in Apuleius in section 11.2.2, above.

Interestingly, Philo also addresses the fact that man was made not only after the image, but also after the likeness (Gen 1:26). In *Opif.* 71, he notes that not all the images resemble their models, but, in fact, many are dissimilar (ἀνόμοιοι).<sup>851</sup> Since this has nothing to do with divine creation, Moses added “after the likeness” (καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν) in order to emphasize that, in this case, we are dealing with “accurate and clearly marked impression” (ἀκριβὲς ἐκμαγεῖον τρανὸν τύπον ἔχων).

It has already been pointed out that a model may be called the image of an object in so far as the former acts as some sort of blueprint for the latter. Moreover, I have suggested that a comparison of models with seals may also shed some light on this use of the term “image”: models are like the images on the seals that are imitated by their impressions in wax or clay. Philo provides us with yet another explanation: some models are images, because they have their own models; sometimes, there is a model of which this model is an image. Thus, the supreme model is the model of the lower model, the lower model is the image of the supreme model, and the images of the lower model are images of the image.

It is now time to turn to Clement. Although the notion of the mundane image does not play an important role in his writings, he is nevertheless familiar with it. According to *Strom.* 5.14.93.4, the barbarian philosophy, i.e. the Bible, is aware of the fact that the visible universe is the image and imitation of the noetic one. According to Salvatore R. C. Lilla, this one of those instances where Philo is Clement’s “teacher and model”.<sup>852</sup>

Κόσμον τε αὖθις τὸν μὲν νοητὸν οἶδεν ἡ βάρβαρος φιλοσοφία, τὸν δὲ αἰσθητὸν, τὸν μὲν ἀρχέτυπον, τὸν δὲ εἰκόνα τοῦ καλουμένου παραδείγματος

Moreover, the barbarian philosophy knows that there is the intelligible world and the sensible one and that the former is the archetype and the latter is the image of the so called model.

It is, however, more important for the present discussion that Clement follows Philo in his interpretation of Gen 1:26–7.

Like Philo, Clement argues that the image of God is God’s Logos, whom he identifies with the Son, and that the man made after this image (= the image of the image) is the human mind: “the image is God’s divine and royal Logos, the human being that is free from passions, and the image of the image is the human mind (εἰκὼν μὲν γὰρ θεοῦ λόγος θεῖος καὶ βασιλικός, ἄνθρωπος ἀπαθής, εἰκὼν δ’ εἰκόνης ἀνθρώπινος νοῦς)” (*Strom.* 5.14.94.5). Elsewhere, Clement specifies that the common element in this threefold hierarchy of God, his Logos, and humanity is the mind: the human mind is the image of the Logos, who is the son of the mind (= God).<sup>853</sup> Notably, Philo offers a very similar hierarchy of minds in *Her.* 230–1 (see the discussion above).

For “the image of God” is His Logos (and the divine Logos, the light who is the archetype of light, is a genuine son of the mind [υἱὸς τοῦ νοῦ γνήσιος]); and an image of the Logos is the true man, that is, the mind in man (ὁ νοῦς ὁ ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ), who on this account is said to have been created “after the image” of God, and “after the likeness,” because through his understanding

<sup>851</sup> This notion is reminiscent of Plato’s discussion of poorly and finely made images (*Crat.* 431c–e; see section 11.2.1).

<sup>852</sup> See Lilla 1971, 191–2.

<sup>853</sup> Cf. Casey 1924, 46.

heart he is made after the image (παρειαζόμενος) of the divine Logos, and so reasonable (λογικός) (*Protr.* 10.99.4; trans. G. W. Butterworth, altered).

There is, however, a remarkable innovation that Clement makes in his interpretation of Gen 1:26–7.

Unlike Philo, Clement interprets καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν of Gen 1:26 from the standpoint of the Platonist doctrine of the goal of human life, i.e. ὁμοίωσις θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν, “becoming as like God as possible” (Plato, *Theaet.* 176b; trans. M. J. Levett and M. Burnyeat).<sup>854</sup> As Clement puts it, “some of our people (τινὲς τῶν ἡμετέρων) accept the view that a human being has received ‘according to the image’ at birth, but will secure ‘according to the likeness’ later, as he attains perfection” (*Strom.* 2.22.131.6; trans. J. Ferguson). That, by “some of our people,” Clement refers to himself is clear from the following exhortation, which Clement puts in the Son’s mouth (*Protr.* 12.120.4).

ὦ πᾶσαι μὲν εἰκόνες, οὐ πᾶσαι δὲ ἐμφερεῖς· διορθώσασθαι ὑμᾶς πρὸς τὸ ἀρχέτυπον βούλομαι, ἵνα μοι καὶ ὅμοιοι γένησθε

All of you are images, but not all of you resemble your archetype; I want to restore you to order, so that you may become like me.

In his interpretation of καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν, Clement starts from the same premise as Philo did: not all images faithfully imitate their models. But the conclusions that they reach are different. Philo offers a “static” interpretation, arguing καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν is added to κατ’ εἰκόνα precisely in order to emphasize that Gen 1:26–7 refers to images that accurately resemble the Logos. Clement, on the other hand, offers a “dynamic” interpretation, claiming that human beings are imperfect images of the Logos and that their goal is to set themselves right and to become like their model.

This survey of the Platonizing interpretations of Gen 1:26–7 allows me to take a step forward in the interpretation of saying 83. Since this saying is familiar with the Platonist dialectic of mundane and paradigmatic images and since this saying also alludes to the Biblical concept of God’s image, it seems reasonable to conclude that *Thomas* shares its understanding of Gen 1:26–7 with Philo and Clement and interprets εἰκὼν θεοῦ as the paradigmatic image after which humanity was created.

#### 11.4. The Meaning of *Thomas* 83:1

It is now possible to proceed to the interpretation of saying 83. The structure of the saying is antithetic; its two parts are set against each other, the first dealing with the mundane images, the second with the paradigmatic images. I begin with the first part. *Thomas* 83:1 consists of three statements: (1) there are images that are manifest to the humankind (there can be little doubt that πρῶμε is used in the collective sense; cf. the discussion of οἰκῶν below); (2) there is light within these images; (3) this light is concealed “in the image.” Let us discuss these statements one by one.

(1) First of all, it seems reasonable to suggest that *Thomas* 83:1 makes use of the Platonist metaphysical vocabulary and employs the term νηικῶν (\*εἰκόνες) in the sense of the sensible

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<sup>854</sup> Cf. Runia 2001, 233.

(mundane) objects.<sup>855</sup> As my survey has shown, this meaning of εἰκὼν originated with Plato and is attested in various Middle Platonists, including Philo, Pseudo-Timaeus, Plutarch, Alcinous, Apuleius, Numenius, Theon, and Clement.

(2) Second, the idea that there is light within the mundane objects would not be confusing for the readers of *Thomas*. *Thomas* calls the ultimate reality that everyone has to look for “the light” and “the kingdom” (cf., e.g., sayings 49 and 50) and a number of Thomasine sayings teach that the kingdom/the light is already present in the world, yet no one can see it.<sup>856</sup>

(3) Third, the claim that the light of the images is concealed εἰς τὸ εἰκὼν, “in the image,” is somewhat problematic. The antithetic structure of saying 83 suggests that *Thomas* 83:1 and *Thomas* 83:2 are supposed to mirror each other: if, according to *Thomas* 83:2, the image of the father is concealed by the light, then, according to *Thomas* 83:1, the light must be concealed by the images. The problem, however, is that the light is said to be concealed in the image (εἰς τὸ εἰκὼν), not in the images (ἐν τοῖς εἰκόνι). Why is it in the singular and not in the plural?

It is possible that εἰς τὸ εἰκὼν refers to the world. As my survey has shown, the world is qualified as an image in Plato, Philo, Pseudo-Timaeus, Plutarch, Alcinous, and Clement. The world can also be called *the* image, since, as the greatest of all images, it contains in itself all other images.

It is more plausible, however, that the author is merely making a generic point.<sup>857</sup> It is fairly certain that πᾶν in *Thomas* 83:1 is used in the collective sense and refers to every single human being. Similarly, περὶ τῆς εἰκόνος in *Thomas* 84:1 (quoted in section 11.6, below) means “your likeness” in general, i.e. “anything that resembles you.” Thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that the singular number of εἰς τὸ εἰκὼν is supposed to be understood in the same way. It is also possible that the author wrote εἰς τὸ εἰκὼν, in order to accentuate the antithetic parallelism of the two parts of the saying: the singular number of εἰς τὸ εἰκὼν in *Thomas* 83:1 matches the singular number of ἐν τῷ εἰκόνι in *Thomas* 83:2. Thus, the image that conceals the light is contrasted to the image that is concealed by the light.

### 11.5. The Meaning of *Thomas* 83:2

While *Thomas* 83:1 describes the present situation, *Thomas* 83:2 deals with what is going to happen in the future. *Thomas* 83:2 states that, in the future, the light of the father will become manifest. The implication of this statement is that the light of the father is not yet manifest in the present. And, if the light of the father is not manifest in the present, there has to be a reason for this. Since the focal point of *Thomas* 83:2 is the relationship between the light of the father and the image of the father, it seems reasonable to suggest that the hiddenness of the light of the father in the present is somehow related to the current state of the image of the father.

My suggestion is that the author of saying 83 shares with some other early Christians their belief that humanity had lost their divine image, εἰκὼν θεοῦ, after the Fall.<sup>858</sup> In the present, the light of the father is hidden, because the image of the father is lost; in the future, the divine image will be restored, and this will make the divine light manifest.

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<sup>855</sup> This interpretation was first suggested in Patterson 2011b, 56.

<sup>856</sup> See the detailed discussion of this Thomasine motif in chapter 5.

<sup>857</sup> Stephen J. Patterson pointed this out to me in a personal communication (18 December 2012).

<sup>858</sup> Cf. DeConick 1996, 157–64.

The notion of the loss of God's image as a postlapsarian condition is present, for instance, in Tatian's *Oratio ad Graecos*. According to Tatian, the first human beings had both the soul and something that was greater than the soul, the spirit. The spirit was θεοῦ εἰκὼν καὶ ὁμοίωσις (12.1). Initially (ἀρχῇθεν), the spirit was the soul's companion, but "gave it up when the soul was unwilling to follow it" (13.2; trans. M. Whittaker). This happened because of sin (διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) (20.1). After the transgression, the one who was made in the image of God was separated from the spirit and became mortal (7.3).<sup>859</sup> Hence, "we ought now to search for what we once had and have lost (ὅπερ ἔχοντες ἀπολώλεκαμεν τοῦτο νῦν ἀναζητεῖν)" (15.1; trans. M. Whittaker).

The motif of the lost image of God is present in *Thomas* 22:6 and *Thomas* 84:2. As I have argued in chapter 7, the exhortation to make "an image instead of an image," οὐγκῶν ἐπιμαῖ νογκῶ(ν), seems to refer to the transformation of "the image of Adam" (Gen 5:3) into "the image of God" (Gen 1:26–7 and 5:1 LXX). The fact that this transformation is necessary implies that, in the present, humankind is not in possession of the image of God, that the divine image was replaced with another, non-divine image.

The same notion of the loss of God's image seems to be attested in saying 84. This saying (quoted in section 11.6, below) contrasts the vision of our sensible likenesses (reflections, portraits, statues, etc.) with the vision of our divine images. The implication seems to be that both likenesses and images exist outside of us. Moreover, according to *Thomas* 84:2, they came into being before us, and, unlike us, they will not perish. Most importantly, divine images do not become manifest. Just like the divine light is hidden in *Thomas* 83:2, so also are the divine images hidden in *Thomas* 84:2. While our likenesses are easily accessible, our images are elusive: they are concealed from us and therefore evade our grasp. Since they are virtually out of our reach, it takes effort to obtain vision of them. When obtained, this vision is hardly bearable. Although saying 84 does not provide us with any explanation why our images are removed from us, it is reasonable to conclude that these images were in us at some point and that we later became separated from them, i.e. lost them.

Thus, *Thomas* 83:2 presupposes that the protoplast was in the possession of God's image when he was in paradise and that he was deprived of it after the Fall. The loss of God's image is the reason why the light of the father is hidden. But what exactly does "the light of the father," ποιοεὶν ἡπαιωτ, mean? Since loss of the divine image is a postlapsarian condition, it seems natural to suggest that the disappearance of the divine light is also a postlapsarian condition. I suggest, therefore, that "the light of the father" refers to the divine light that surrounded Adam before the Fall.

A number of early Jewish texts maintain that, before the Fall, Adam was a luminous being. The absence of visible radiance is thus a postlapsarian condition: it indicates that human nature has become perverted. When human beings restore their nature, they will once again be luminous. As Louis Ginzberg points out, "the splendor of Adam's countenance is the concrete expression of the legend of the divine nature of man before his fall, and belongs to the view concerning the light of the pious in the world to come, which is prevalent in Jewish, as well as in Christian, eschatology."<sup>860</sup>

Many early Jewish literary texts state that, after the transgression, Adam lost his glory.<sup>861</sup> According to the Life of Adam and Eve, when Eve ate from the fruit, she realized that she committed a sin and said, "I have been separated from my glory (ἀπηλλοτριώθην ἐκ τῆς δόξης μου)" (LAE 20:2).

<sup>859</sup> This idea seems to be attested already in Wis 2:23–4.

<sup>860</sup> Ginzberg 1909–1928, 5:112.

<sup>861</sup> See, e.g., Rom 3:23 and 3 Baruch 4:16. See also the examples listed in Jarvell 1960, 45.

Later on, after she persuaded Adam to eat the fruit, he said, “You have separated me from God’s glory (ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ)” (LAE 21:6).

It should be reminded at this point that, in the Hebrew Bible, the glory is quite often understood as a visible radiance (see, e.g., Ex 24:16; 1 Kgs 8:10–11). This is also the case in early Christian literature (Luke 2:9; 9:31–2). It is quite clear that δόξα is a radiant substance in the Life of Adam and Eve as well. The serpent says to Eve, “come to the plant (i.e. to the tree in the midst of the paradise) and you will see the great glory” (LAE 18:5), which implies that the glory is visible.<sup>862</sup>

The idea that in the last times the righteous ones will restore their glory is also present in early Jewish literature (see, e.g., 1 En. 50:1; cf. Rom 8:17–8). It parallels the idea that the righteous ones will shine like the sun and the stars (see, e.g., Dan 12:3; 4 Ezra 7:97; 7:125; 1 En. 104:2; 2 Bar. 51:10; Matt 13:43).<sup>863</sup>

According to 2 En. 66:7,<sup>864</sup> the radiance of the righteous will be much brighter than sunlight: **Блажени праведници иже избежатъ сѣда великаго Господне, зане просвѣтитъ сѣ пауче сѣнца седморицеа**, “Blessed are the righteous ones who will escape the great judgment of the Lord, for they will shine seven times brighter than the sun.”<sup>865</sup> In the second century, Montanus, an early Christian teacher, went even further and claimed, “The righteous one will shine a hundred times brighter than the sun” (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.10.3).

To sum up, *Thomas* 83:2 describes the relationship between two entities, the light of the father and the image of the father. This expression, “the image of the father,” should be understood as the Thomasine equivalent of εἰκὼν θεοῦ of Gen 1:26–7. The metaphysics of saying 83 is indebted to the Platonizing interpretation of Gen 1:26–7 attested in Philo and Clement. According to this interpretation, εἰκὼν θεοῦ is a paradigmatic image, a model after which the humankind was created.

Interestingly, however, there are certain motifs that *Thomas* 83:2 borrowed from non-Platonist sources. First, it adheres to the notion that the image of God was lost. It is because of the loss of God’s image that humanity became so miserable. Second, not only did mankind lose the divine image; it also became deprived of its luminosity. It seems that the reason why humans are not luminous at the present time is due to the loss of God’s image.

<sup>862</sup> Moreover, some manuscripts make the luminous nature of glory even more obvious by saying that the glory was round about the plant (περὶ αὐτοῦ). See Tromp 2005, 143.

<sup>863</sup> Most of these examples are from Bousset and Gressmann 1966, 277.

<sup>864</sup> The text reproduced below comes from the long recension of 2 Enoch. Verse 66:7 of the long recension is parallel to verse 65:11 of the short recension, **Блажени праведници иже избежатъ соудъ великаго Господня, зане просвѣтитъ сѣ лица ѿко сѣнце**, “Blessed are the righteous ones who will escape the great judgment of the Lord, for (their) faces will shine like the sun” (Vaillant 1952, 62). It seems that the text of the long recension, with its emphasis on the symbolism of the number seven (see Böttrich 1992, 118), is original, whereas the text of the short recension is a later harmonization with Matt 17:2. It is worth noting that the relationship between the two recensions of 2 Enoch, the long and the short ones, is a matter of debate; see, e.g. Böttrich 2012, 41–4; Navtanovich 2012, 71–7; Macaskill 2013, 19–33. The most balanced position seems to be that of Francis I. Andersen, who argues that, at least in some cases, the manuscripts of the long recension are likely to preserve authentic readings; see Andersen 1983, 93–4; Andersen 2008, 5.

<sup>865</sup> Vaillant 1952, 112. As Böttrich 1996, 1000, notes, this passage draws on the imagery of Isa 30:26. A similar passage, also dependent on Isa 30:26, occurs in the Thanksgiving Scroll, where the author proclaims, “I shine forth with sevenfold light (שִׁנְיָא שִׁבְעָא)” (1QH<sup>a</sup> XV, 27). 2 En. 66:7 also has a number of parallels in early Christian narratives about the Parousia. In Ep. Apos. 16:3, Jesus says, **ἡμεγ γαρ ἡμερε ἡμερι ἐπιρρωογ δογ εειε νογαεине ἡσαρχ ἡκων παραραγ ρη παεαγ**, “For I will come like the radiant sun and shining seven times brighter than it in my glory” (Schmidt 1919, 6\*). The same phrase occurs in Apoc. Pet. 1. Cf. Philip’s vision of Christ in Acts Phil. 2:15, **τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἐπαπλάσιον λάμπων ὑπὲρ τὸν ἥλιον**, “his face was shining seven times brighter than the sun.”



Luckily, the situation is going to change. According to *Thomas* 83:2, mankind will regain its divine image, along with which, mankind will also reclaim its luminosity. It is this blinding splendor that *Thomas* 83:2 describes, when it notes that the image of the father will be concealed in the light of the father. The point is that the light will be so bright that it will make it impossible to see anything else.

#### 11.6. The Metaphysics of the Image in Sayings 22, 50, and 84

Having discussed the meaning of *Thomas* 83, I proceed to other sayings that deal with images, e.g. *Thomas* 22, *Thomas* 50, and *Thomas* 84. I have already offered an interpretation of the replacement of images in *Thomas* 22:6 in section 11.5. As I have already pointed out, *Thomas* 83:2 refers to end times, when the humankind will regain its divine image. *Thomas* 22:6 explains how this image was lost and how it can be restored. This saying tells us that some time in the past, the (glorious and divine) image of God was replaced with the (non-divine) image of Adam. To attain salvation means to follow the reverse procedure, replacing the image of Adam with the image of God.

In *Thomas* 50:1, when the interrogators ask them where they came from, the addressees of Jesus' instruction are supposed to give the following answer: "We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established [itself] and became manifest through our<sup>866</sup> image." In other words, their image was produced by self-generated, immovable<sup>867</sup> light. There seems to be no reason why this image should not be identified with the divine image of *Thomas* 22:6 and *Thomas* 83:2, the one that was lost in the past and will be found in the future.

While *Thomas* 83:2 deals with eschatology, i.e. the salvific event that will take place in the future, *Thomas* 50:1 deals with protology, i.e. the moment that laid the foundation for the history of salvation. There is certainly some similarity between Thomasine eschatology and protology, but the two are by no means identical. Rather, what we have here is antithetic parallelism. In the beginning, the light revealed itself in the image. In the end, the image will be hidden in the light.

Thus, the Thomasine history of salvation presupposes a progress in the dialectic of the image and the light. After light had generated itself and become immovable, it produced the image; it is by means of this image that it became manifest (*Thomas* 50:1). When humanity regains its image, the light of the image will be so bright that the light will conceal the image. In other words, the image will produce the light; it is by means of this light that the image will become manifest (*Thomas* 83:2). In the past, the image was the manifestation of the light; in the future, the light will be the manifestation of the image.

The last saying to be discussed in this survey is *Thomas* 84. Just like *Thomas* 83, it offers a fusion of Biblical and Platonist motifs. Certainly, the saying borrows its combination of likeness and image from Gen 1:26, reinterpreting both terms from the Platonist perspective. The Coptic text of *Thomas* 84 and its English translation are as follows:<sup>868</sup>

84:1 πεχε ιϥ δε ν̄ροοϥ ε̄τετ̄νναϥ επ̄ετ̄ν̄εινε φ̄αρετ̄ν̄ραϥ 84:2 ροταν δε ε̄τετ̄ν̄ωαν̄ναϥ  
 αν̄ετ̄ν̄ρικων ν̄ταρ̄ωωπε ρι τετ̄νερη οϥτε μᾱρμοϥ οϥτε μᾱροϥων̄ς ε̄βολ τετ̄ναϥι ρα οϥηρ

<sup>866</sup> The grounds for this translation are given in chapter 8.

<sup>867</sup> For the motif of "transcendental" standing in *Thomas* 50, see chapter 8.

<sup>868</sup> I have modified the translation of the Berliner Arbeitskreis, see Patterson 2011b, 19.

84:1 Jesus says: “When you see your likeness,<sup>869</sup> you are full of joy. 84:2 But when you will see your images that came into existence before you—they neither die nor become manifest—how much will you bear?”

The phrasing of *Thomas* 50:1 (*our* image) and *Thomas* 84:2 (*your* images) indicates that both sayings refer to the same phenomenon.<sup>870</sup> Since εἰκών in *Thomas* 84:2 designates the same paradigmatic image as it does in sayings 22, 50, and 83, it follows that the term εἶνε in *Thomas* 84:1 is probably also used in the Platonist sense. It probably should be understood as a likeness (ὁμοίωμα) or an imitation (μίμνημα) of a model. Thus, πετῆνε, “your likeness,” probably refers to something like a portrait or a reflection in the water.<sup>871</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain which Greek word, ὁμοίωμα or ὁμοίωσις, was rendered as εἶνε in *Thomas* 84:1. On the one hand, in the Sahidic Bible, εἶνε usually renders Greek ὁμοίωμα.<sup>872</sup> On the other hand, in the Sahidic version of Gen 1:26, καθ’ ὁμοίωσιν is rendered as κατὰ πενεῖνε.<sup>873</sup> Since saying 84 contrasts “likeness” with “image” and, therefore, most certainly alludes to Gen 1:26, it is possible that εἶνε renders ὁμοίωσις.

Thus, the author of the saying could have altered the Biblical expression (εἰκών + ὁμοίωσις) to the one that sounds more Platonic (εἰκών + ὁμοίωμα). Alternatively, he could have retained the Biblical expression: it is possible that the author did not see any significance in the variation between ὁμοίωμα and ὁμοίωσις and assumed that the two words are synonymous.

That ὁμοίωσις can be used as a synonym of ὁμοίωμα and designate an imitation of a model is clear from the treatise “On Harmony,” a third- or second-century BCE<sup>874</sup> pseudepigraphon written in Doric and ascribed to Aristaeus of Croton, allegedly a pupil of Pythagoras and his immediate successor as head of the Pythagorean school (Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 36.265). Having postulated that the first principle (ἡ ἀρχή), i.e. God, is eternal, the author argues that “the images and likenesses of this first principle are both among the things produced by nature and the things produced by art (εἰκόνες δὲ καὶ ὁμοιώσεις τῆς ἀρχῆς ταύτας καὶ ἐν τοῖς φύσει γινόμενοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τέχνην)” (Περὶ ἁρμονίας fr. 1 Thesleff = Stobaeus, *Anth.* 1.20.6).

Be that as it may, εἰκών in *Thomas* 84:2 designates a model, while εἶνε in *Thomas* 84:1 designates an imitation of a model. The saying, therefore, contrasts the objects that are our imitations with the objects that are our models. Jesus’ question may be reformulated in the following fashion: “If you rejoice when you see the things of which you are models, what will happen to you when you see the things that were the models according to which you were made?” In other words, the joy of those who see their mundane likenesses is nothing compared to the reverent awe of those who see their paradigmatic images.

<sup>869</sup> As I have noted above, πετῆνε (“your likeness”) in the singular should be understood in the collective sense, i.e. “anything that resembles you.”

<sup>870</sup> For a discussion of the plural number of πετῆνικων, “you images,” see below.

<sup>871</sup> Cf. Patterson 2013, 47.

<sup>872</sup> See Crum 1939, 80b; Wilmet 1957–1959, 1:195; Draguet 1960, 131a.

<sup>873</sup> See Lemm 1906, 098.

<sup>874</sup> For this date, see Thesleff 1961, 101–2.

The list of qualities attributed to images also seems to emphasize the distinctiveness of paradigmatic images. According to *Thomas* 84:2, the images came into being before humans; moreover, they do not die. Thus, while humans and their likenesses are transitory and perishable, images are primeval and immortal. It is also said that images do not become manifest. Thus, unlike humans and their likenesses, images are hidden. While our likenesses readily present themselves, the images are concealed from us and, therefore, difficult to grasp. Thus, Jesus' question can also be reformulated as follows: "If you rejoice when you see the things that are ephemeral, what will happen to you when you see the things that are indestructible? If you rejoice when you see the things that are manifest, what will happen to you when you see the things that are hidden?"

This last detail, that the images are hidden, is most certainly an indication of their salvific role: the hidden things, after all, are those that Jesus reveals to the ones who become like him (saying 108). The hiddenness of images makes *Thomas* 84:2 resonate with *Thomas* 50:1 and *Thomas* 83:2. According to these sayings, the light and the image play the major role in the salvation history; this salvation history is conceptualized as the dialectic of being hidden and being manifest. According to *Thomas* 50:1, the light became manifest through the image. According to *Thomas* 84:2, images do not become manifest. According to *Thomas* 83:2, the light that will conceal the image will become manifest.

It seems appropriate to summarize the tenets of the Thomasine metaphysics of image, which, as I have pointed out, is a constituent of the Thomasine salvation history. The salvation history comprises three defining points: the beginning, the Fall, and the final restoration. In the beginning, the light produced itself, established itself ("stood," i.e. became immovable) and revealed itself through the paradigmatic image. This is the image after which humanity was made (hence, "our" image in *Thomas* 50:1). Then, the catastrophic event took place: the divine image was replaced with a counterfeit. Hence, the misery of the present-day world: our images do not reveal themselves (*Thomas* 84:2), and the light is concealed in mundane images, i.e. sensible objects (*Thomas* 83:1). This situation will change only when we replace the counterfeit image with the true one (*Thomas* 22:6). Then and only then will the final restoration take place: humanity will regain its paradigmatic image; the divine light surrounding the image will be revealed; this light will be so bright that no one will be able to see the image (*Thomas* 83:2).

The last issue that I must address in this chapter is the seemingly inconsistent use of the singular and plural forms. When *Thomas* 84:2 describes the current state of affairs, it refers to divine *images*, in the plural. Thus, not only are the images hidden, they are also not one, but many. All other sayings, however, deal with the divine *image*, in the singular. Why is this so? It seems reasonable to conjecture that this alternation of the singular number with the plural has something to do with the Thomasine metaphysics of oneness.<sup>875</sup> The Thomasine salvation history is not only about the lost and regained divine image; it is also about the lost and regained oneness.

As I noted in chapter 7, a number of Thomasine sayings are indebted to the Platonist idea of oneness as perfection. Humanity lacks oneness, and the Thomasine Jesus, much like Middle Platonists, exhorts the reader to "become one." Moreover, just like the Thomasine metaphysics of image is a creative fusion of Platonist and Biblical motifs, so also is the Thomasine metaphysics of oneness. A number of Thomasine sayings (see especially *Thomas* 11:4) are likely to presuppose a

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<sup>875</sup> For a detailed analysis of this Thomasine motif, see chapter 7.

myth of Adam's initial oneness. Once again, *Thomas* offers us a tripartite scheme: mankind was one in the beginning; it is devoid of oneness now; and it will regain its oneness in the future.

Once we compare the "history" of oneness and that of the image, it becomes clear why the image was one in the beginning and will be one in the end, and why it is not one now. The fact that "our" images are many (*Thomas* 84:2) indicates that, at the present day, humanity lacks oneness and therefore suffers from imperfection. Once we attain perfection and become one, the divine image will also be one, just as it was one in the beginning.

### 11.7. Conclusions

I began this chapter with a discussion of the text of *Thomas* 83. NHC II is our sole witness for the text of this saying. As a rule, the text of the manuscript, as long as it is grammatical, should be accepted as it stands. Yet *Thomas* 83 appears to be an exception to this rule. The expression "the image of the light of the father" is bizarre and does not seem to have any parallels in ancient literature, whereas a small and elegant emendation suggested by the Berliner Arbeitskreis makes the saying comprehensible and draws out its resonance with various Greco-Roman and early Jewish traditions. Moreover, the same emendation transforms the saying into a chiasm, one of the frequently-used literary devices in *Thomas*.

In my discussion of the background of saying 83, I pointed out that the only intellectual tradition that, just like *Thomas*, makes a distinction between two types of images, the mundane and divine ones, is Platonism. While Plato uses the term εἰκών, "image," only in the former sense, i.e. as a designation of the sensible objects, Middle Platonists since Philo's times use this term also as a synonym of παράδειγμα, "model." Moreover, at least two authors of a Platonist persuasion, Philo and Clement, interpret the creation account in Genesis along the lines of the Platonist metaphysics of the image and thus argue that God's image, after which humanity was made, was in fact the paradigmatic image.

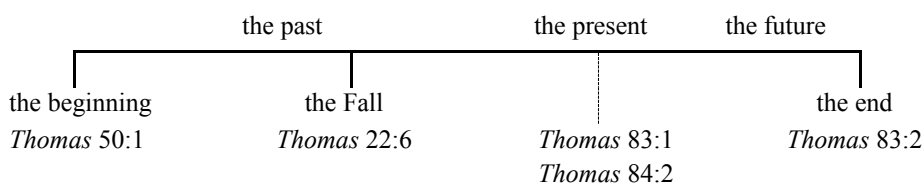
Having discussed the background of saying 83, I proceeded to its interpretation. The first verse of the saying, *Thomas* 83:1 describes our existence in the present-day world. The visible images manifest to us are images in Plato's sense, i.e. sensible objects. There is light in these images, but we cannot see it. The second verse, *Thomas* 83:2, describes the moment in the future when the situation will drastically change. Today, we cannot see the light inside the sensible objects. In the future, humanity will regain its divine light, i.e. the splendor that once surrounded the protoplast, and this light will be visible. Humanity will also have restored to it its divine image, i.e. the image according to which the protoplast was made, but, unlike the mundane images of *Thomas* 83:1, this image will be invisible because of the brightness of the divine light.

These findings allowed me to gain better insight into other sayings that deal with images. As I pointed out, *Thomas* 50:1 deals with protology, i.e. how the paradigmatic image came about. *Thomas* 22:6, on the other hand, deals with the tragic moment in the past, when the paradigmatic image, the image of God (Gen 1:26–7 and 5:1 LXX), was replaced with a counterfeit, the image of Adam (Gen 5:3). To attain salvation means to undo this process and to regain the divine image. *Thomas* 84:2 deals with the current state of affairs: it describes the relationship between our images and us in the present.

It is worth noting that, just like saying 83 seems to draw on Platonist speculations about mundane and paradigmatic images, so also does saying 84 appear to be aware of the Platonist notions

of the likeness and the model. The “likeness” of *Thomas* 84:1 is what Plato called *ὁμοίωμα* in his dialogues: an imitation of a model, e.g. a reflection in the water or a portrait made by an artist. The “image” of *Thomas* 84:2 is the model, i.e. the paradigmatic image. Thus, *Thomas* 84:1 describes that which imitates us, whereas *Thomas* 84:2 describes that which we imitate. In other words, saying 84 portrays the contrast between different levels of being. Just as a human is greater than his or her likeness, so also is the paradigmatic image of this human greater than the human him- or herself.

Having treated each of the relevant sayings individually, I proceeded to a discussion of the Thomasine metaphysics of the image as a whole. Most significantly, *Thomas* employs the language of the image to talk about salvation history. The sayings discussed in this chapter provide us with sufficient information to reconstruct the Thomasine views on the three defining points in history (the beginning, the Fall, and the end) and the three historical stages (the past, the present, and the future), represented thus:



In the beginning, the light revealed itself by means of the paradigmatic image (*Thomas* 50:1). Later, this image was replaced with a counterfeit (*Thomas* 22:6), which is the reason why, today, the light is concealed in mundane images (*Thomas* 83:1) and the paradigmatic images do not become manifest (*Thomas* 84:2). In the end, the situation will change: the restored image will reveal itself by means of the light (*Thomas* 83:2). As this summary demonstrates, Thomasine protology and eschatology do not duplicate each other; *Thomas* does not envision salvation as merely returning to the original state. Rather, there is an antithetic parallelism between protology and eschatology; the end is, in a way, the opposite of the beginning.

Finally, at the end of this chapter, I offered a reflection on the alternation between the singular and plural numbers in the sayings that deal with the paradigmatic image. The fact that the plural form occurs only in *Thomas* 84:2, the saying that deals with the current state of events, makes it likely that the use of the plural number is intentional. As I pointed out, to attain salvation in *Thomas* means not only to restore the image, but also to “become one.” Moreover, just like we had the image, but lost it, so also we were “one,” but then became “many.” Thus, “our images” in the plural in *Thomas* 84:2 reflects the woeful fact that present-day humanity is devoid of oneness.

### Part III. Concluding Remarks

A certain sixth-century Alexandrian Neoplatonist wrote the following in the very beginning of his (or her?<sup>876</sup>) introduction to philosophy:

Those who have a longing for philosophical arguments and have tasted their pleasure with the tip of a finger (ἄκρω δακτύλῳ), having bid farewell to all life's cares, are manifestly impelled towards these arguments by some kind of sane madness (σώφρονί τινι μανίᾳ) and rapidly evoke (ψυχαγωγοῦσι) the longing (ἔρωσ) for them by means of the knowledge of the things that are (David, *Proleg. philos.* 1.4–7 Busse).

This passage describes the force with which philosophy transforms an individual, even if this individual has touched it with just “the tip of a finger.” This individual leaves all his or her earthly concerns behind, yields to “sane madness” and longs for philosophical discourse (an allusion to Plato's notion of longing, ἔρωσ, as a type of divine madness, θεία μανία).

*Thomas* is neither a philosophical text nor a Platonist one. Unlike philosophical works, *Thomas* does not attempt to persuade its readers by means of an argumentative discourse. The majority of Thomasine sayings have nothing to do with Platonist philosophy. *Thomas* savored the delight of philosophy with the fingertip, which makes it quite understandable why the Platonist flavor of this text went almost unnoticed by scholars of *Thomas*. Yet even a gentle touch of philosophy makes a significant impact.

As Stephen J. Patterson has put it, Middle Platonism is a “dialect”<sup>877</sup> spoken by *Thomas*. Surely, *Thomas* is a polyglot and speaks many tongues, but Platonism is important nonetheless. In the main part of this dissertation (chapters 5–11), I have demonstrated that Platonism provides us with a better understanding of some sayings in *Thomas*. Moreover, Platonism is the key to gaining insight into a number of the Thomasine *crucis interpretum*, e.g. sayings 7, 61, and 83. Without appreciating *Thomas*' appropriation of Platonist metaphysics, a considerable number of its sayings would remain a riddle wrapped in enigma.

At this point, it seems appropriate to repeat what I have already noted in chapter 1: it is impossible to produce a reliable reconstruction of the compositional history of *Thomas*; hence, it seems reasonable to focus on the text attested by the extant witnesses. The subject of this study, therefore, was the prototype of P.Oxy. 1, P.Oxy. 654, P.Oxy. 655, and the second writing of NHC II. This prototype was a Greek text composed somewhere between the late first and early third centuries CE; it is this text that throughout this study has been called *Thomas*.

In this dissertation, the sayings that exhibit Platonizing tendencies were discussed in their Thomasine textual performance and as an integral part of *Thomas*. The questions of the provenances of these sayings, their “original” formulations (if different from the Thomasine one), their reception in late antique Egypt, etc., lie outside the scope of this study. Having made this clarification, it is now appropriate to make an inventory of the Platonizing sayings in *Thomas*:

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<sup>876</sup> It is worth noting that we seem to have no reliable information on the identity of the author of this text. See Excursus III.

<sup>877</sup> Patterson 2013, 36.

- Sayings 56 and 80 make use of the Platonist notions that the world is a body and that every human body is a corpse in order to express a view of the world that is essentially anti-Platonist: the world is nothing but a despicable corpse.
- The opposition of the body to the soul portrayed in sayings 29, 87, and 112 presupposes a stark dualism of the corporeal vs. the incorporeal and appears to be indebted to Platonist anthropology.
- The Thomasine notion of being/becoming ογα (sayings 11 and 106), ογα ογωτ (saying 4, 22, and 23), and μοναχος (sayings 16, 49, and 75) has the closest parallels within Platonist speculation about oneness as an attribute of a perfect human, a perfect society, and God.
- The expression ωγε ερατ= in sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 reflects the Platonist usage of the Greek verb ἵστημι as a technical term for describing the immovability of the transcendent realm.
- *Thomas* 61 appropriates the opposition of being equal (to oneself) vs. being divided from the Platonist metaphysics of divine immutability and indivisibility.
- The imagery of the lion and the man in saying 7 portrays the struggle between reason and anger and is derived from Plato’s allegory of the soul, reinterpreted from a Middle Platonist perspective.
- The notion of the image in sayings 22, 50, 83, and 84 should be interpreted against the background of the Middle Platonist metaphysics, where the Greek term εἰκῶν came to designate both the model (= παράδειγμα) and its imitation (= ὁμολοῖμα).

As this inventory shows, there are at least nineteen Thomasine sayings (i.e. one-sixth of the entire collection) that were in some way influenced by the Platonist tradition.<sup>878</sup> While this discovery is important, its significance has its limits. For instance, the fact that *Thomas* is a Platonizing text seems to have no bearing on the question of its date. As the examples discussed in chapter 4 demonstrate, Platonist theories already made an impact on the first generations of Jesus believers. In other words, the Platonist nature of a given Christian text is an indicator of its author’s theological preferences, but not of the historical period from which it comes.

It should also be noted that a number of questions related to the Platonizing tendencies in *Thomas* will most probably remain unanswered. It seems unlikely, for instance, that the people behind *Thomas* identified themselves as “Platonic philosophers” or ever had any Platonist affiliations. It is also unlikely that they were either versed in the “proper” philosophical literature or informed of the dogmatic divides between the contemporary schools. Yet they had some knowledge of Platonism. Where did it come from? Did Plato’s name ring a bell for any of them? Would they ever have admitted that *Thomas* is indebted to the Platonist tradition?

What seems clear, at any rate, is that the nineteen Platonizing sayings and, consequently, *Thomas* as a whole bear testimony to the fact that, during the nascent years of Christianity, certain individuals acknowledged *de facto* that the Platonist tradition possessed theoretical principles, concepts, and terminologies that could adequately describe and convincingly explain the nature of

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<sup>878</sup> Sayings 4, 7, 11, 16, 18, 22, 23, 29, 49, 50, 56, 61, 75, 80, 83, 84, 87, 106, and 112; of those, sayings 16, 22, 23, and 50 combine several Platonizing notions: oneness and immovability (sayings 16 and 23), oneness and paradigmatic image (saying 22), and paradigmatic image and immovability (saying 50).

ultimate reality. These Christians recognized, though perhaps only implicitly, the validity of the claim that Plato, at least to a certain degree, came to know the way things truly are.

Clearly, *Thomas* is neither the first nor the only early Christian text with Platonizing tendencies. Rather, it appears to be an important witness to the early stages of the process that eventually led to the formulation of Christian dogmas in Platonist terms. This brings me to the last issue that has to be mentioned in these concluding remarks: prospects for future research. The history of early Christian engagement with Platonism is yet to be written. While quite a few scholars have recently written on Platonizing tendencies in particular early Christian texts (and with this dissertation I aspire to join their ranks), a lot of work is still ahead of us before the appearance of a study offering a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon. We are still to learn to what extent Middle Platonism influenced early Christianity and why early Christians found Platonist metaphysics attractive in the first place.



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## Abstract

It is no secret that Christian dogmatic theology adopted a generous number of its concepts from Platonist philosophy; by the time of the Cappadocian fathers, it was customary to talk about divine matters in Platonist terms. It is, however, much more difficult to track the Platonist influence during the formative centuries of Christianity. In the last decades, the academic community has gradually come to realize that research into the Platonizing tendencies of early Christian texts may shed new light both on their meaning and their historical context. This study advances along this path. Its focus is on the Gospel of Thomas, an early Christian sayings collection. The core hypothesis of the study is that Platonism in its “Middle” form had a significant impact on this text. An inquiry into the Gospel of Thomas with this particular viewpoint has not been done systematically prior to this dissertation. At least nineteen Thomasine sayings (i.e. one-sixth of the entire collection) were in some way influenced by the Platonist tradition:

- Sayings 56 and 80 make use of the Platonist notions that the world is a body and that every human body is a corpse in order to express a view of the world that is essentially anti-Platonist: the world is nothing but a despicable corpse.
- The opposition of the body to the soul portrayed in sayings 29, 87, and 112 presupposes a stark dualism of the corporeal vs. the incorporeal and appears to be indebted to Platonist anthropology.
- The Thomasine notion of being/becoming ογα (sayings 11 and 106), ογα ογωτ (saying 4, 22, and 23), and μοναχος (sayings 16, 49, and 75) has the closest parallels within Platonist speculation about oneness as an attribute of a perfect human, a perfect society, and God.
- The expression ωγε ερατς in sayings 16, 18, 23, and 50 reflects the Platonist usage of the Greek verb ἵστημι as a technical term for describing the immovability of the transcendent realm.
- *Thomas* 61 appropriates the opposition of being equal (to oneself) vs. being divided from the Platonist metaphysics of divine immutability and indivisibility.
- The imagery of the lion and the man in saying 7 portrays the struggle between reason and anger and is derived from Plato’s allegory of the soul, reinterpreted from a Middle Platonist perspective.
- The notion of the image in sayings 22, 50, 83, and 84 should be interpreted against the background of the Middle Platonist metaphysics, where the Greek term εἰκών came to designate both the model (= παράδειγμα) and its imitation (= ὁμῶμα).

These nineteen sayings and, consequently, the Gospel of Thomas as a whole bear testimony to the fact that, during the nascent years of Christianity, certain individuals acknowledged *de facto* that the Platonist tradition possessed theoretical principles, concepts, and terminologies that could adequately describe and convincingly explain the nature of ultimate reality. Although the Gospel of Thomas is neither the first nor the only early Christian text with Platonizing tendencies, it appears to be an important witness to the early stages of the process that eventually led to the formulation of Christian dogmas in Platonist terms.

